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SOME POINTS OF

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

CONSIDERED

WITH REFERENCE TO CERTAIN THEORIES RECENTLY PUT FORTH

BY THE RIGHT HONORABLE

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*Μηδεὶς οἰέσθω με λέγειν ὅτι πάσῃν εἰρήνῃν ἀγαπητέον,—οἶδα γὰρ ὥσπερ
στάσιν τινὰ βελτίστην, οὕτω καὶ βλαβερωτάτην ὁμόνοιαν,—ἀλλὰ τὴν γε
καλὴν καὶ ἐπὶ καλῷ καὶ Θεῷ συνάπτουσαν.—GREGORY NAZIANZEN.*

CAMBRIDGE: J. DEIGHTON.

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1849.

PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.

Placeat vobis, ut quicumque doctrinam Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ vel ejus partem aliquam legibus publicis stabilitam, scriptis, vel dictis, quocunque modo in Academiâ Cantabrigiæ oppugnaverit, ab omni gradu suscipiendo excludatur, et à suscepto suspendatur ipso facto.—*Statuta Ac. Cant. anno 1603.*

ERRATA.

Page.	Line.	Error.	Correction.
10	9	whole and complete	whole perfect and complete.
15	(note 3)	Dr. Burton	Dr. Burton's Bampton Lectures.
17	(note 9)	vocensus	vocemus.
28	10	the work of	the joint work of.
29	2	Word	word.
"	(note 3)	Iren. i. xxv. 5	Iren. i. i. 5.
43	(note 2)	Ephrem Cyrus	Ephraem Syrus.

Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge.

The attention of Cambridge men, and particularly of those who being tutors here are looked upon by the country (whether justly or not) as chiefly responsible for the education given in their University, was very naturally directed to the "Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography." They feel (as in duty bound)

¹ Vol. II. p. 460.

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TOWARDS the early part of the summer of the present year, Sir J. Stephen issued an authentic edition, in two volumes, of a series of his contributions to the Edinburgh Review. These papers were corrected and enlarged, and an Epilogue (then first published) was added to them, in order “to avow without reserve the opinions which had been rather suggested or assumed, than explicitly stated”¹ in the essays themselves.

Shortly after the appearance of these volumes the Author was appointed, by Her Majesty’s Government, Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge.

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¹ Vol. II. p. 460.

an unwonted curiosity about every new Professor, knowing that he is to be their colleague, and to take an important part in training those who are entrusted to their care. For by recent changes a large number of our students are compelled to attend the Lectures of the Professors: so that the influence of that body for good or for evil is very much increased, because so many more are brought within its sphere. At the same time this increase of power is not attended with any increase of responsibility: for the Professors are in some cases appointed by persons who have little interest in the welfare, and less sympathy with the true spirit of our Institutions; and are practically, when once appointed, accountable to no man for the doctrines they deliver, or the opinions which they maintain. Under these circumstances curiosity is not merely venial, it is imperative; and at this time it seems likely to be fully satisfied by the public confession of Faith which the Professor of Modern History has voluntarily made. It is not too much to say, that the University is greatly beholden to him for this very candid avowal of his opinions: no doubt it will be well for the interests of Religion and the Church, if every future Professor is equally explicit in the publication of his sentiments before he formally takes possession of his chair.

In the Preface to these volumes the Writer almost complains that he is "an author in his own despite."² It seems that American booksellers printed the Essays

² Preface, p. v.

under the Writer's name without asking for permission to do so; and the inaccuracy of their impressions compelled him to correct the mistakes which had been made; so that he is further "an author in his own defence."³ It would therefore be unbecoming and impertinent in one whose time is devoted to other labours, to go out of the way to criticise a book which was meant to have no relation whatever to himself: more especially so when the Writer disclaims "any wish to assume to himself the character of a teacher on the sacred topics to which so large a part of the book is devoted."⁴

But the changes above referred to completely alter the Writer's position. "In his own despite" he is now, to some extent at least, a teacher "on sacred topics." The Philosophy of Modern History cannot be disengaged from Theology, because the history of the World has always in Christian times been necessarily interwoven with the history of the Church. The Lectures therefore of the Professor of Modern History must in a very considerable measure take their tone from his theological opinions. Hence the public announcement of his belief demands the notice of some who would not otherwise feel themselves called upon to notice it at all. For the same reason also the errors of the Writer cannot prove so entirely harmless as he "rejoiced to think" that they would be; and a measure of authority which they could not before claim "will

³ Preface, p. vi.

⁴ Ibid.

now be attached by other inquirers to his mere 'Guesses after Truth.'"⁵

The Writer professes that he gave the Epilogue to the world in order to "assist as far as possible in the detection of any fallacies by which he may have been misled."⁶ It is never a pleasing, and seldom an useful task to perform the office of censor. Yet the following strictures are put forth, partly from a sense of duty, partly from a conviction that fallacies which the Writer is not unwilling to contemplate as possible, do really exist in the Epilogue. There is much in these pages which has been penned with deep regret for the cause which makes it needful to write in this way at all: there is nothing (it is believed) which is uncalled for. The simple endeavour throughout has been to take a plain and fair view of the matters under consideration, though it is confessed that they are seen under an aspect quite different from that under which the Writer of the Essays appears to have regarded them. If indeed these sheets contain anything unworthy of a Christian student, or anything which can wound a sensitive and an upright mind, by all means let it be devoted to the odium which it deserves.

The Writer of the Epilogue is charged with being guilty of two departures from the Christian Faith.

First, he is accused of having revived the ancient Gnostic heresy, touching the Incarnation of our Blessed Redeemer: and secondly, he has asserted his

⁵ Vol. II. pp. 460, 461.

⁶ Vol. II. p. 461.

unwillingness to believe the doctrine of the eternity of the future punishment of the wicked. There are other objections of minor importance, but these are the startling deformities which stand prominently upon the face of the Essay.

It is only just to add, that the Writer has a motive for denying the eternity of future punishment, which would be amiable if it were lawful to admit such a motive at all. He is moved by a tenderness for those whose preconceived notions of justice are offended by the doctrine ; and he indulges a hope, that if this fearful truth could be given up, the mythic interpreters of Scripture would relinquish their system, and return at length to sober reason.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION.

SECTION I.

Regula quidem fidei una omnino est sola immobilis et irrefragabilis.—TERTULLIAN.

WHEN we remember that the Writer of the Epilogue is one “who desires to disclaim that state of mind to which all religious distinctions are insignificant:”¹ and when we consider that, as a member of the English Church, and in respect of supposed former services or peculiar qualifications, he is now a Professor in an English University, we are not prepared to find the Catholic Faith as expressed in the Scriptures and in the Creeds overlooked or impugned in his writings. It is no doubt a grave matter even to suggest this supposition, yet it is to be feared that a perusal of the following pages will bring to light much in the Epilogue which cannot possibly be reconciled with those standards of Christian faith, which the Writer in common with ourselves recognizes as authoritative, and has assented to as true.

Let it be remembered then, that amongst the many conflicts which the Primitive Church had to endure, none occasioned so much anxiety as the repeated attempts in various ways to corrupt or to

¹ Epilogue, p. 460.

explain away the right faith concerning the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence a recognition of this doctrine always formed part of the ancient Creeds. We find therefore, in that very ancient symbol commonly called the "Apostles' Creed," the doctrine of the Incarnation stated in few but expressive words, "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." This short statement is expanded, and the doctrine more largely declared, in the Creed usually known as the Nicene Creed.² "And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." In still more precise terms the doctrine is asserted in the Creed known as the Creed of Athanasius:³ for when heresy and false doctrines were stated with logical subtilty and disguised by the phraseology of "science falsely so called," it became needful to meet this exigency of the time by a peculiar and exclusive counter-statement of the truth.⁴ Concerning the Eternal Generation of the Son

² Agreed upon at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381.

³ See Professor Blunt's Sermon before the University, March 8th, 1849, p. 17.

⁴ The Symbolum 'quicumque' by its antithetical form is far more

of God we declare, “the Son is of the Father alone, neither made nor created, but begotten.” Concerning his Incarnation, thus: “the right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man: God of the substance of His Father begotten before the worlds, and Man of the substance of His mother born in the world. Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting: equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood. Who although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ: one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ.”⁵

The faith thus expressed in the Creeds is incorporated into the Hymns and Prayers of the Church. In the Hymn called ‘Te Deum Laudamus,’ we sing, “Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ: Thou art the

exclusive than either of the other two. Hence the bitterness with which this Creed has at all times been assailed. Yet the sincere Christian thankfully employs it as a safeguard to prevent him from wandering out of the way of truth either to the right hand or to the left; for in every Article he has a positive proposition to guide him on the one side, and a negative one to guard him on the other.—See Hagenbach, vol. i. p. 267.

⁵ Sunt autem tria Symbola.....Primum factum est ad fidei instructionem; secundum ad fidei explanationem; tertium ad fidei defensionem.—*Ludolphus Saxo*.

Everlasting Son of the Father: When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb." And in the Collect for our Lord's Nativity we say, "Almighty God, who hast given us Thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon Him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin, &c."

The faith of the Church then is this:⁶—We believe in One Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten before all worlds, so begotten that He is the Everlasting Son of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God. We believe that this Eternal Son of God was made man, that He took the manhood⁷ into God, that "He took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and the Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ."⁸ We believe further that *this* Christ was truly born, truly suffered, was truly crucified,⁹ dead and buried, "to reconcile the Father to us, and to be a sacrifice both for original guilt, and also for all actual sins of men."

But that it may not appear that the Creeds are wrested to serve a particular purpose, or that

⁶ It would be quite out of place here, to prove over again, what has been so often proved before, that the Faith of the Church is the Creed of Holy Scripture.

⁷ Not "united Himself to one of the sons of men."—Ep. p. 478.

⁸ Art. ii.

⁹ Ignatius ad Trall. ix.

private opinions are put forward under cover of the grave and sacred authority of the Church, the sentence of another shall be alleged. It would be easy to multiply quotations, but one only shall suffice. It is the exposition of a Bishop, who in his sacred office was διδακτικός¹ and by the profound severity of his learning δυνατὸς καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαينوῦσῃ, καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν.²

“Thus the whole and complete nature of man was assumed by the Word, by Him who was conceived and born of woman, and so made a man.³ And being the Divine Nature which he had before could never cease to be what before it was, nor ever become what it was not; therefore He who was God before by the Divine Nature which He had, was in this Incarnation made man by that human nature which He assumed. And thus the third article of our Creed, from the conjunction with the second, teacheth us no less than the two natures really distinct in Christ incarnate.”

“Being then he which is *conceived* was the *only Son of God*; and that *only Son* begotten of the substance of the Father, and so always subsisted in the Divine nature: being by the same conception he was made truly man, and consequently assumed an

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 24.

² Titus i. 9.

³ The Epilogue declares that ‘the Logos was united to *a* man’: *i.e.* to an *individual* of the species. If one man had been taken into God (if such a thing may be reverently spoken), then one man only had been redeemed.

⁴ Pearson on the Creed, vol. i. p. 201. (Oxford, 1843).

human nature:—being these two natures cannot be made one, either by commixtion or conversion; and yet there can be but one Christ subsisting in them both, because that only Son was he which is conceived and born: it followeth that the union which was not made in the nature⁵ was made in the person of the Word; *i. e.* it was not so made that out of both natures one only should result, but only so that to one person no other should be added.”

“Nor is this union only a scholastic speculation, but a certain and necessary truth, without which we cannot have one Christ but two Christs, one Mediator but two Mediators: without which we cannot join the second Article of our Creed with the third, making them equally belong to the same person: without which we cannot interpret the sacred Scriptures or understand the history of our Saviour. For certainly he which was before Abraham was in the days of Herod born of a woman: he which preached in the days of Noah, began to preach in the reign of Tiberius, being at that time about thirty years of age: he was demonstrated the Son of God with power, who was the Seed of David according to the flesh: he who died on the cross raised him from the dead who died so, being put to death through the flesh and quickened by the Spirit. He was of the fathers according to the flesh, who was God over all blessed for ever.

⁵ How darkly the Epilogue overclouds this truth! “In whom the incommunicable attributes of the Divine Nature are *reconciled with* the essential conditions of the nature of Man.”—p. 466.

Being these and the like actions and affections cannot come from the same nature, and yet must be attributed to the same person: as we must acknowledge a diversity of natures united, so must we confess the identity of the person in whom they are conjoined.”⁶

Let now the following passage in the Epilogue be examined:

“No speech or language in use among mankind can express, because no human intelligence can conceive, the true sense of that revelation which exhibits Him who is love, as becoming in the person of His Son a sacrifice for us. Alas, for the foolishness which has agitated the world in the attempt to embrace or to analyse so profound a mystery! Our debates about the incarnation and the atonement resemble nothing more than the discussions which some one has supposed to take place among the animalculæ detected by our microscopes, about the mechanism of the celestial orbs made known to us by our telescopes.⁷ Our real knowledge, however distorted, inflated, and magnified by our phraseology, amounts to little more than our acquaintance with the fact, that by withholding from our Maker and from our brethren our appointed tribute of love, we raise an obstacle to our

⁶ Pearson, vol. I. p. 203.

⁷ It is not impossible that these learned animalculæ might arrive at a more sober conclusion from such speculations than some learned men have done from theirs. For between the soul of an animalcule and the laws of the planetary orbits there is some proportion; between the reason of man and the mystery of redemption there is none.

future happiness, for the removal of which the Divine Logos united himself to one of the sons of men, and in that human person lived in humiliation and died in agony.⁸ But a darkness which no inquiry tends to dissipate, and which no conjecture contributes in any measure to dispel, broods over all questions respecting the nature and reason of that obstacle, and respecting the meaning of the hypostatic union of the Logos with our humanity, and respecting the nature of Him by whom and in whom that union is effected, and respecting the sense in which His sufferings have made a propitiation for our sins.”⁹

The sudden transition from light to darkness is always attended with perplexity. Let us however try to realise the impression which these hard words and dark sentences are calculated to produce. We are first informed that no human language can express what no human thought can conceive. It is granted: but with what consistency does the Writer in the same sentence tell us that the sense of God’s revelation can be neither conceived nor expressed, and yet affirm that it exhibits “Him who is love, as becoming, in the person of His Son, a sacrifice for us”? Surely a very decided and a very wrong sense¹⁰ of God’s revelation is hereby both conceived

⁸ Theophylact, on Matt. xi. 11, observes that by the word *γεννακῶν* Jesus excepted himself, because He was born of a Virgin.—*Dr. Burton in loc.*

⁹ Epilogue, p. 478.

¹⁰ Pearson, vol. I. p. 198; vol. II. p. 119.

and expressed!—The folly of the world is next deplored, which attempts to “embrace or to analyse so profound a mystery:” but is there not another folly, equally deplorable, which first invents a mystery of its own, and then imputes the darkness inseparable from that invention to the saving mysteries of God’s holy Word?—Debates upon the subject among men are compared to discussions amongst animalculæ about the solar system and the double stars! Yet if this be a just rebuke of heretical fallacies, it implies (by including both the contending parties) a too severe censure of the patient and sorrowing zeal with which the Fathers of the Church “contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.”¹—Next follows a marvellous account of our real knowledge: a revival (as we shall see) of the *γνώσις* of earlier times. The bar to our future happiness is explained to be not “the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam;”² not the practical evil wickedly transacted by each one in his own person, but the “withholding” of love from our Maker and our brethren!—The Incarnation is represented as the uniting of the Logos with one of the sons of men, not as the assumption by the Word of the complete nature of man.—The Atonement is placed out of sight by a veil of self-imposed obscurity. Darkness which cannot be dissipated or dispelled is said to brood over all questions relating to the sense in which His sufferings have

¹ Jude v. 2.

² Article ix.

made a propitiation for our sins: so that under these circumstances we seem to be scarcely warranted in believing that an atonement has been made;³ we are almost forbidden to conclude that "God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him:"⁴ nor may we venture to think (though it be the only knowledge in the world worth caring for) "that man hath sinned and God hath suffered; that God hath made Himself the sin of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God."⁵

SECTION II.

The loosing of faith is like digging down a foundation; all the superstructures of hope and patience and charity fall with it.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

THE foregoing statement of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as maintained in the Epilogue, will it is believed appear to be but little, if at all, consonant with the doctrine of the Church. The question therefore arises, With what system does this strange teaching harmonize? Is it new, or is it merely the resuscitation of some previous heresy? We apprehend that there can be no doubt upon this subject,

³ See Burton, pp. 235, 242. It is true that the writer elsewhere speaks of Christ as our 'Atoning Sacrifice,' p. 471. But of what value are these or any other words, if an impenetrable darkness hangs over their meaning?

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 21.

⁵ Hooker, Vol. II. p. 606, Sermon. ii. (*Oxford*, 1841.)

though there may perhaps be some difficulty in fixing upon the archetype. For example, every one will recollect the heresy of Nestorius which consisted in separating Christ from God, and arose out of an attempt to avoid attributing human accidents and actions (such as being born, suffering, or dying,) to God.⁶ Nestorius held that the divine and human natures of Christ ought to be personally separated, and admitted only an indwelling (*ἐνὸρκησις*) of the Deity in Christ. It will be remembered also that this heresy grew up within the bosom of the Church, and was started by one who all the time wished to be considered orthodox, and laboured much to shew that his opinions were the true doctrine of the Church and of Holy Scripture. There is therefore a remarkable analogy between the position of Nestorius and that of the Writer of the Epilogue; and a remarkable agreement between them upon doctrine. But there are features of the Epilogue, more particularly its Platonic cast,⁷ which induce us to go further than Nestorius in search of a parallel. In fact when it is borne in mind that *the leading idea* of the doctrine of the Epilogue is the distinction between the Logos and the man to whom the Logos was united, few persons who are at all acquainted with the records of Primitive Christianity, can fail to recognise the revival of the earliest heresy which disturbed the Church of Christ, and which (in the opinion of many)

⁶ Nestorius was condemned at the Synod of Ephesus, A.D. 431.

⁷ See Appendix A.

amounted almost to a renunciation of Christianity itself.⁸

Moreover it is not a little remarkable that the Gnostic heresy also rankled within the bosom of the Church, and did not break out into open schism. The Gnostics themselves felt aggrieved because they were refused admission to the fellowship of the Church, and because they were called heretics.⁹ And now, by a strange coincidence, their doctrines are revived by one who, being within the pale of the Church, has developed in the nineteenth century a new (so called) "Catholic Belief", and a new "Catholic Morality, broad and comprehensive enough to form the eternal basis of a Catholic Church and of a true Christian unity"¹ never before heard of;—by one who will no doubt complain of the bigotry of some who dare not acknowledge those who make profession of a heretic's creed with their mouth, to be Catholic Christians at heart.

⁸ Dr. Burton's Bampton Lectures, (*Oxford*, 1829), p. 227.

Dr. Burton in another place remarks: "Though the doctrines of the Gnostics have long since ceased to be maintained, yet we may perhaps learn something of true Christian faith, if we observe the errors and corruptions by which it was perverted."—pp. 238, 239. It is to be feared that these doctrines may yet have to be studied with a more direct object in view than that suggested by the Doctor.

⁹ Dr. Neander *General Church Hist.* vol. II. p. 74, (*Edinb.* 1847). "Queruntur de nobis quod cum similia nobiscum sentiant, sine causâ abstineamus nos a communicatione eorum, et cum eadem dicant, et eandem habeant doctrinam, vocensus illos hæreticos."—*Iren.* iii. 15.

¹ Epilogue, p. 499.

It may be well however to anticipate an objection against the evidence which will be produced in support of the charge just now made. We do not deny that different accounts of some Gnostic tenets are given by different writers. But this consideration will not invalidate our proof; for respecting the doctrine now under consideration, all Theologians who have furnished a particular account of the Gnostic opinions are perfectly agreed. Accordingly, quotations will be given from independent sources, from the writings of men whose leanings are in opposite directions, and whose learned labours, having no reference to the present time, cannot be suspected of representing these doctrines to be any other than what they really are.

First then let us hear the evidence of Dr. Burton.

“In speaking of the doctrines of these heretics (the Cerinthians and the Ebionites), we must be careful always to observe their distinction between Jesus and Christ. Concerning the person of Jesus they differed, but concerning the descent of Christ upon Jesus at his baptism they were perfectly agreed. They therefore made Jesus and Christ two distinct persons; and they would neither have said that *Christ* was born, nor that *Jesus* was the Son of God.”²

Dr. Neander very much to the same purpose, gives the following sketch of Gnostic views concerning the person of Christ.

² Dr. Burton's Bampton Lectures, p. 185.—See also, to the same effect, pp. 38, 187, 237, 242.

“All Gnostics were in a sense agreed in this respect, that they could not acknowledge the unity of the human and divine natures in *the person of Christ*.....Some regarded the humanity of Christ as real, and as possessed of a certain dignity of its own; yet.....they divided the one Christ into two Christs—a higher and a lower, a heavenly and an earthly Christ—the latter serving merely as an organ to the former; and this not by an original and inseparable union with him, but in such a sense that the former first united himself with the latter at his baptism.”³

Dr. Mosheim makes the following statement.

“The Gnostics of the Egyptian class.....generally considered Christ our Saviour as consisting of two persons, the man Jesus and the Son of God, or Christ; and the latter, the divine person, they supposed to have entered into Jesus the man, when he was baptized in Jordan by John.”⁴

Now on comparing these extracts with the Epilogue one remarkable difference will be observed. The Gnostics are very particular in stating the *time* when Christ united himself to Jesus. They all agree in maintaining that this conjunction took place when He was baptised in the Jordan. Nothing of this kind will be found in the Epilogue; and the names Jesus⁵ and Christ are not employed by the Writer in the

³ Neander, General Church History, vol. II. p. 69, 70.

⁴ Mosheim's Institutes, (edited by Soames,) 1845, vol. I. p. 196.

⁵ The name Jesus does not occur in the Epilogue at all.

same distinctive sense as they are by the Gnostics. Let it be remembered therefore that the Writer is not charged with teaching *all* that the Gnostics taught concerning the person of Christ. But the Gnostic doctrine agrees with that of the Epilogue in essence. Both assert that the Divine Logos,—a Divine person or a Divine energy,⁶—united Himself to a man,—“to one of the children of Adam,”—“to one of the sons of men;” and that the Being thus compounded is the Redeemer promised in the Old and preached in the New Testament. In this way they contravene the teaching of Holy Scripture and of the Church, that “the Word was made (or “became”) flesh and dwelt amongst us,”⁷ that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and Man.⁸

If also from this general sketch of Gnostic opinions, we proceed to state the tenets of particular teachers, it will be found that Cerinthus and Basilides, two of the most noted of them, “asserted that the Logos (Christ) had descended upon the man Jesus at his baptism.”⁹

Dr. Neander’s account of these heretics is very diffuse. A short extract however will suffice to shew that the notion of an union betwixt the Logos and a man is distinctly preserved.

⁶ There is pretty much the same confusion upon this point in both.

⁷ John i. 14, *σὰρξ ἐγένετο*.

⁸ The Creed commonly called the Creed of Athanasius.

⁹ Hagenbach’s Hist. of Doctrines, vol. i. pp. 164, 165, (*Edinb.* 1846).

“The Christology of Cerinth is based on the common Ebionite way of thinking.¹ . . . In common with the Ebionites, he traced back all divine attributes in Christ to that descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him which accompanied His baptism. The Holy Spirit he regarded as the spirit of the Messiah, (*πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ*) as the true heavenly Christ himself, (*ὁ ἄνω Χριστὸς*). . . . The lower earthly Messiah, (*ὁ κάτω Χριστὸς*) the man Jesus, was only the vehicle and organ of that heavenly Christ who wrought in him.”²

“ . . . Basilides . . . like Cerinthus agreed entirely with the Ebionites in supposing a sudden entrance of the Divine Nature into the life of Jesus, and admitting no such thing as a God-man, in whom from the first the divine and the human elements were inseparably united. . . . The man Jesus was not in his view a Redeemer, he differed from other men only in degree. . . . Jesus in his view was merely the instrument whom the redeeming God selected for the purpose of revealing himself in humanity, and of entering into it with an influential agency. The Redeemer in the proper and highest sense of the term was, as he supposed, the highest Æon, sent down by the supreme God to execute the work of Redemption. This Being united himself with the man Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan.”³

¹ See vol. ii. pp. 16, 17.

² Church Hist. vol. ii. p. 85.

³ Ib. p. 102. A statement of the views of Cerinthus corroborating the above is contained in the 75th note to Dr. Burton's Lectures,

But some of the most curious verbal coincidences with the above statements of the Epilogue occur in the Ecclesiastical History of Dr. Mosheim. He gives this account of the opinions of Cerinthus.

“God had determined to subvert His power (the power of the Creator of the World,) through one of the most blessed Æons, whose name was Christ. This Christ had entered into a certain Jew, named Jesus, (a very righteous and holy man, the Son of Joseph and Mary by ordinary generation,) by descending upon Him in the form of a dove.”⁴ Of Basilides he writes thus:—“Therefore the Supreme God in compassion to the souls endued with reason, sent down from heaven His Son, or the Prince of the Æons, whose name was Nus (*νοῦς*) and Christ; that he, joining himself to the man Jesus, might restore the lost knowledge of His Father, and overturn the empire of the Angels, &c.”⁵

It is true that Dr. Burton complains of Mosheim's account of these heresies, as being “meagre and superficial;” but he does not call in question its general accuracy. Indeed he speaks of Mosheim in the highest terms of praise, as one “whose name and

p. 479. It is quoted from Irenæus and Epiphanius. The object of the Lectures being “to consider the heresies which infested the Church in the first century, while some of the Apostles were still alive;” (Bamp. Lect. p. 4), Basilides, who flourished in the 2nd century, is not named. See also Lardner's Cred. vol. viii. pp. 356, 357, and 411, 412. This latter writer cannot be accused of any prejudice in favour of Orthodoxy and Catholicism.

⁴ Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 127.

⁵ Vol. i. pp. 197, 198.

writings are too illustrious to require much comment.”⁶ And although this praise is not altogether unqualified, but followed by a timely caution, the testimony of our witness is not thereby depreciated. For the Doctor complains that Mosheim indulges in a spirit too boldly speculative,⁷ and too little congenial with the forms and institutions of our own Church: and it is presumed that this would be considered a venial transgression, if judged by the principles laid down in the Epilogue.

Let us then very briefly recapitulate and compare the sentiments of the Epilogue with those of Cerinthus and Basilides upon the doctrine of Redemption, and the person of the Redeemer. We find Basilides asserting that the Divine Father “was moved with compassion to the souls endued with reason:”—the Epilogue sees him “condescending to our weakness.” According to Cerinthus, “God had determined to subvert the power of the Demiurge;”—the Epilogue says that the Divine Logos came to remove an obstacle to our future happiness, raised by the withholding of the love due from us to God and to our brethren:—the parallelism here consisting in that wayward originality which in each case devises a reason why Almighty God should send His Son. The Messiah of the Epilogue is made up of the Divine Logos, and one of the Sons of men: the

⁶ *Introductio* to Bampton Lectures, p. xvi.

⁷ Would not this be called in our day a *Protestant* spirit? Epilogue, p. 490.

Messiah of Cerinthus and Basilides is compounded of a Divine Æon, or Nous, or Logos, and of a man. The Messiah of Basilides comes to restore the lost knowledge of his Father : the Messiah of the Epilogue “imparts to us the loftiest thoughts and the holiest aspirations of which our humanity is susceptible.”

The attentive student of Church History cannot fail to observe a great similarity in almost all heresies. Their name indeed is Legion, and their differences in points of detail are almost innumerable, but there is a certain general resemblance amongst them. Their features are distinct, but the family likeness is stamped upon all.⁸ Perhaps this is the reason why we find in the Epilogue traces of the most opposite heresies. We see for instance features of Gnosticism and Nestorianism, which ‘divided the persons’ (pp. 477, 478); we ob-

⁸ The impatient and fretful reason of man does indeed strive after novelty, but there are certain lines of thought along which it seems constrained to move. Some have started aside to the right hand, some to the left, but all wander into the broad ruts of the beaten track : all are undesignedly going along the same road, while each tries to strike out a new path for himself. The avenues through which men depart from the truth are manifold, but the divergent ways soon become parallel, and the end to which they lead is often the same. This circumstance is so striking, that we are tempted to suspect the existence of some general law under which all these erratic movements are performed. Sorely vexed as our poor world is by the strife of jarring opinions, it may be that some merciful limit is fixed, beyond which further perplexity is not attainable. One form of false opinion succeeds to another, but the new light is often a very servile reflexion of some of its forerunners. Most persons will grant that there is some truth in this observation, if they will allow their memories to glance backwards.

serve also something akin to the heresy of the Patripassians and the Eutychians (p. 478), who ‘confounded the substance’—Yet the Gnostics, the Monarchians, the Patripassians, the Eutychians, Paul of Samosata, Arius, the Socini, the Deists, the (so called) Unitarians,—what are they all but successive developments, in different directions, of the same depraved idea? In each form there was diversity, in all a certain agreement. So that error, no less than true doctrine, has had its succession from the Apostles downwards to our own time.

For example: if we pass on from the Gnostics to their immediate successors, Theodotus and Artemon.* “They supposed that when the man Christ was born, a certain *divine energy*, or some portion of the divine nature united itself to him.¹ This is the reflexion of Gnosticism; could it be the shadow cast before the coming of the Epilogue?

Sabellius held that a certain energy put forth by the Supreme Parent, or a certain *portion* of the Divine Being, separated from it, became united with the *Son*, or the man *Christ*.²

Paul of Samosata, “so far as can be judged from the accounts that have reached us, held, that Christ was born a mere man; but that the Logos of the Father

* Theodotus is notorious as being the first who asserted that Jesus Christ was a mere human being. Dr. Burton, Bamp. Lect. p. 247.

¹ Mosheim, vol. I. pp. 205, 206: Neander, vol. II. p. 333, &c.

² Mosheim, vol. I. p. 271.

descended into him and enabled him to teach and to work miracles: that on account of this union of the Divine Logos with the man Christ, we might say that Christ is God, but not in the proper sense of that term.”³

SECTION III.

In unâ eâdemque re et nescienti sciens, et erranti non errans rectâ ratione præponitur. In diversis autem rebus, id est, cum iste sciat alia, ille alia; et iste utiliora, ille minus utilia vel etiam noxia: quis non in eis quæ ille scit ei præferat nescientem? Sunt enim quædam quæ nescire quàm scire sit melius.—AUGUSTINE.

THUS far we have traced the direct and almost verbal coincidence between the Epilogue and certain ancient forms of heresy. But this is not all; for if the spirit of Gnosticism be indeed in the Epilogue, there can scarcely fail to be some casual and more incidental traces of it.

Dr. Neander calls attention to a remarkable feature of Gnosticism, which he terms “a revival of the aristocratic spirit.”⁴ The Gnostics divided mankind into two classes: the privileged natures, the men of intellect, the *πνευματικοί*; and the rude mass of the *ψυχικοί*. It is the birthright of the former *to know*: it is the humbler prerogative of the latter

³ Mosheim, vol. i. p. 274. See also Dr. Burton, Bamp. Lect. p. 250: Neander, pp. 362, 363.

⁴ Vol. ii. p. 42.

to believe. Now although the writer of the Epilogue carefully expresses the largest charity⁵, and an almost universal benevolence,⁶ though he embraces within the far-reaching arms of a latitudinarian philanthropy all sorts of men, from Pope Hildebrand downwards through Ignatius Loyola and Luther, to Baxter and John Wesley,—though he is almost equally careful⁷ or careless⁸ about the distinctions of religious belief, at one time heaping censures upon the Church,⁹ at another bepraising schismatics¹ with reckless impartiality; yet even in this respect he fails to be consistent with himself. Whilst tracing up to God the light of our intellectual instincts he professes that “there are depths of ignorance and abysses of self-inflicted misery, into which the possession of these great elements of knowledge has never prevented, and *never can prevent, the great body of mankind* from plunging”²—so that all men possess the light of certain instincts, but all men are not able to use it to good purpose; the great body of mankind (the *ψυχικοί*) being constrained by some invincible fatality, or urged by some irremediable stupidity, to fall headlong into the abyss of human ignorance.

. Again: in the paragraph with which the avowal of the Writer's opinions begins, all revealed truths are

⁵ Epilogue, p. 468.

⁶ p. 497. Compare Aug. de Civ. Dei, xxi. 17.

⁷ p. 460, “desirous to disclaim, &c.”

⁸ p. 501, ad finem.

⁹ p. 481.

¹ pp. 500, 501

² p. 462.

summed up into the two, 'that God is Light,' and 'that God is Love.'³ There is a savour of Gnosticism about this syllabus of revelation. It puts us in mind of the antitheses of Basilides,⁴ and of the prominence which all the Gnostics gave to their idea, that light or increase of knowledge was the main thing bestowed on us by the Revelation of God.⁵

Other vestiges of the Gnostic spirit seem traceable in the unbecoming way in which the Writer speaks of the Bible as "the work of princes, peasants, &c.;"⁶ in his not scrupling to ascribe the differences amongst contending sects, partly to alleged imperfections in the Bible itself;⁷ in sometimes splitting hairs about the literal meaning of a word or a phrase,⁸ at other times making much of a spiritual interpretation;⁹ in feigning variations between different books, and different parts of the same book, as regards the plenitude of the inspiration;¹ in the insinuation that we cannot be sure that we have a correct report of the very words which our Blessed Saviour uttered.² Most of these questions were mooted by the Gnostics, and

³ Another truth equally cardinal, and also revealed by S. John (Gospel, i. 4, xi. 25; 1 Epist. v. 11, 12), is that 'God is life.' Does this truth fully harmonise with the Writer's notion of the condition of man since the fall of Adam, or his theory of the nature and consequences of sin, or of the plan of redemption? (p. 478).

⁴ Neander, vol. ii. p. 93.

⁵ Dr. Burton, Bampton Lectures, p. 569.

⁶ Ep. p. 466. ⁷ p. 468, "indistinctness and ambiguity."

⁸ pp. 468, 490, &c.

⁹ pp. 469, 470.

¹ p. 469.

² p. 491.

indeed it is not surprising that the same persons should have an unsettled belief in the written Word, who held an imperfect faith touching the Word Incarnate.

To prove this assertion, Irenæus says of them, "When they are refuted from the Scriptures, they turn round and accuse the Scriptures themselves, as if they were not true and of no authority; and because they contain variations, and because the truth cannot be discovered from them by those who are ignorant of tradition."³

But further: the eternity of matter and the origin of evil were questions which largely occupied the attention of the Gnostics: they appear also prominently in the Epilogue.⁴ Mosheim informs us that the Gnostics of the Egyptian class believed matter to be eternal and also animated.⁵ Neander, in giving a summary of the questions about which they especially busied themselves, mentions these amongst others,—“How to conceive the beginning of Creation? Whence, if God is perfect, the imperfections of this world? Whence is moral evil, if Holy God is man's Creator?”⁶

The thought, more than than once⁷ expressed in

³ Dr. Burton, Bampton Lectures, pp. 302, 303. Irenæus, III. ii. 1. See also I. xxv. 5. Tertullian de Præs. Hær. 17, 22 and 25. Theodoret, ad 1 Tim. vi. 20. Hyppol. contra Hær. Noeti, c. iv.

⁴ Ep. pp. 474, 475.

⁵ Mosheim, vol. i. p. 196, compare Ep. p. 474.

⁶ Neander, vol. ii. p. 50.

⁷ Ep. pp. 475, 476, 478.

the Epilogue, that sin is an obstacle to our future happiness raised by the withholding of love, coupled with the belief, (doubtfully declared) that this obstacle will at length be universally removed,⁸ suggests another Gnostic opinion. "The fundamental thought with Mani and the Gnostics is this, that the blind force of nature which resists the Godlike element, tamed and subdued by intermingling with it, should finally be rendered altogether powerless."⁹

Lastly; a favourite theme of speculation with the Gnostics was the inquiry about the first creation and the existences before the world and our material universe were formed. The same subject engages the attention of the Writer of the Epilogue, and he is led to conceive and to assert the eternity of matter. Esteeming it, as he does, to be 'presumption' to talk of the Deity dwelling alone from eternity; he considers it pious to regard the 'creation as coeval with the Creator!' By following this train of thought he falls upon something which is near akin to the Pleroma of the Gnostics, of whom for example we read thus: "The *Gnosis* would not acknowledge any such limits (*i.e.* as Christianity imposed) to speculation. It would explain, clear up to the mental vision, how God is the source and ground of all existence. It was thus obliged to place in the essence of God himself a process of development, through which God is the ground and source of all existence..... It substituted.....the intuitive idea of an efflux

⁸ p. 497 compared with p. 494. ⁹ Neander, vol. II. p. 211.

of all existence out of the supreme being of the Deity.”¹ How strikingly this harmonises with a sentiment expressed in the Epilogue! “And that prolific volition, what was it but the will of Him who is love, that His throne should be girt about by a countless host of spirits, whom He might regard with complacency and enrich by His beneficence?”²

It is almost impossible to believe that Sir J. Stephen, being aware of the Philosophical Systems of these early heretics, deliberately copied their opinions, and so made an eclectic system of his own. It is perhaps still less credible that a Writer of Ecclesiastical Biography should be ignorant of these doctrines altogether. We are therefore at a loss to account for the strange analogies which have been pointed out. One thing at least is plain, that with a profound disregard for the warnings of former times, or else with unaccountable forgetfulness of the history of the past, the Writer of the Epilogue demands our assent to many opinions and speculations which have been rejected, not only by the authority of the Catholic Church, but also by the voice of Universal Reason, almost ever since the time of the Apostles!

¹ Neander, vol. II. p. 51.

² Epilogue, p. 474.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ETERNITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

SECTION I.

Perhaps Divine goodness, with which, if I mistake not, we make very free in our speculations, may not be a bare single disposition to produce happiness ; but a disposition to make the good, the faithful, the honest man happy.—BUTLER.

IN the latter part of the Epilogue, which is devoted to the discussion of the question of the Eternity of Future Punishment, the Writer does not deny that there will be a penal retribution in the next life for sins committed in this, but he attempts to overturn the received opinion that the penalty of sin will be everlasting in its duration. It is however probable that this portion of the Book will attract a larger share of attention than any other part of the Epilogue ; partly because most persons will be surprised to meet with an open attack upon an Article of Christian faith which they have learned and believed from their childhood : and partly because the attack is sustained by a species of criticism which, if pressed to its legitimate consequences, would leave us in doubt whether we have an account (which can be relied on) of anything which our Blessed Lord uttered,¹ and whether in truth we have any Divine Revelation at all.

¹ p. 491. “ No human being” &c.

The subject is introduced whilst the Writer is enlarging upon the proposition that ‘God is Love.’ The question obviously arises, How can the eternal punishment of sin be reconciled with love to the sinner ? For the solution of this question, so vastly important and so involved in mysteries which are beyond the limit of human reason, the Writer naturally turns to Holy Scripture. He justly observes that “retribution is stamped upon every page and line of the Bible:”² and then tells us that the mythic theory of Strauss and its various modifications have been imbibed by multitudes in order to get rid of that, amongst other unpleasant truths. He thinks that this doctrine is “the real, though unavowed, ground of the doubts which overcloud the spirits of many nominal disciples of Christ,” and declares his conviction that it is so replete with horror, and so provocative of invincible incredulity, that of those who “*believe* that it really proceeded from the lips of Christ Himself, many are sorely tempted by it either to *doubt the divine authority of any of His words* or to destroy their meaning by conjectural evasions of their force.”³

It may be that the Writer, during his intercourse with mankind, has met with persons such as he describes ; but, by his own account of them, they cannot be dealt with either as scholars or as Christians. As scholars, we have no common ground with them, for “they apply to the sacred text canons of criticism

² Ep. p. 488. ³ p. 489.

which would be universally rejected as altogether extravagant and wild if applied to any other writing.”⁴ As Christians it is impossible to meet them, for they are not afraid to “doubt the divine authority of words” which they believe Christ Himself to have uttered; or if their madness does not proceed so far as this, they dishonestly attempt to “destroy the meaning of His words by conjectural evasions of their force.” To them therefore, if to any at all, we may without lack of charity apply S. Paul’s rule, “Mark such, and avoid them.”⁵

After so describing these men, the Writer of the Epilogue (to our surprise) on the next page espouses their cause! For the sake of their unreasonable and uncandid scruples⁶ he “ventures to inquire or rather to suggest the inquiry, whether any sufficient authority really exists for asserting that either Christ himself or his apostles taught the doctrine of a penal retribution which is to be ‘eternal’ in the same sense that the Deity is eternal.”⁷

In pursuing this inquiry (which in fact can only be regarded as a laboured attack upon the truth of the doctrine), three topics are insisted upon :

1. The alleged silence of the Old Testament and of many of the books of the New.

2. The critical difficulties of the passages in the New Testament which relate to the subject, and particularly the supposed impossibility of ever knowing what our Lord said in Matt. xxv. 46.

⁴ Ep. p. 488. ⁵ Rom. xvi. 17. ⁶ Ep. p. 498. ⁷ p. 490.

3. The probabilities for or against the commonly received interpretation of His words.

We speak under correction, but if the Writer had really followed out the question with which he started, viz. whether "either Christ Himself or his Apostles taught the doctrine," he ought to have omitted the last of these three topics altogether. For if we once make out that Christ and His Apostles really did, or really did not, teach the doctrine, (and this is simply a matter of fact), it is useless to consider probabilities in favour of its truth or falsehood. If Christ and His Apostles did teach the doctrine, (supposing their teaching to have authority), it is of no use to shew that it is probably not true, certainty being greater than probability: and if they did not teach it, it is of little value to prove that it is probably true, since it could not be required to be believed as an article of faith at all.

Still under correction, and with some diffidence, it is suggested that in order to establish his position the Writer was required:

1. Either to shew that Holy Scripture is altogether silent upon the subject.

2. Or to demonstrate that the passages commonly relied upon to prove the doctrine, fairly admit of another meaning; and *to state* (which we do not perceive that he has done) *what that meaning is*.

3. Or lastly, if these passages really bear the meaning which is commonly assigned to them, to supply sound critical reasons to shew that they are

interpolated or without authority of manuscripts, and therefore that they ought to be thrown out of the sacred books.

It is believed that the Writer could not prove the first of these propositions: the second, (as it would appear,) is somewhat foreign to his department of literature:^s we should do him an injustice if we did not take for granted that he is aware of the impossibility of the third.

But it is useless to dwell upon what has *not* been done: and we therefore turn our attention to what the Writer has endeavoured to accomplish.

SECTION II.

In Holy Scripture is fully contained what we ought to do, and what to eschew, what to believe and what to love, what to look for at God's hands at length..... And as the great clerk and godly preacher S. John Chrysostom saith, whatsoever is required for the salvation of man, is fully contained in the Scripture of God. He that is ignorant may there learn and have knowledge. He that is hard-hearted, and an obstinate sinner, shall there find everlasting torments, prepared of God's justice, to make him afraid, and to mollify or soften him.—HOMILY I.

THE Writer alleges that “with the exception of one dubious expression in the Book of Daniel, the Old Testament is entirely silent on the subject of the eternity of future punishment.”⁹

The passage which is thus referred to as a “dubious expression” is this: “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life

^s Ep. p. 492.

^t p. 490.

and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”¹ The same Hebrew word (which is here translated “everlasting,”) occurs in both clauses of the text. We may venture to state without fear of contradiction, that no person who is competent to form an opinion upon the subject at all, can doubt or deny that this Hebrew word has the meaning of “everlasting,” in the strictest sense in which we use that term. Moreover, that it has that sense in this passage is clear; since they do not only beg the question at issue, but also set common sense at defiance, who are prepared to say that the “contempt” will terminate, but that the “life” will have no end.

But since the Writer here raises no question about the inspiration either of the Old or of the New Testament, it will not be necessary to dwell upon this, or to cite other places in the Old Testament which are usually held to bear upon this question. For one inspired declaration is all that is needed, and whether it be found in the Old Testament or in the New is all one to us Christians: it is God’s Word, and God’s Word cannot deceive. Certainly all sober persons must agree with the conclusion so forcibly stated by Hooker, “although ten thousand general councils would set down one and the same definitive sentence concerning any point of religion whatsoever, yet one demonstrative reason alleged, or *one manifest testimony* cited from the mouth of God to the contrary, could not choose but outweigh them all; inasmuch as for

¹ Daniel, xii. 2.

them to have been deceived it is not impossible ; it is that demonstrative reason or testimony divine should deceive.”²

If the case required it however, there would be no difficulty in shewing that the Jews before our Saviour’s time believed that the wicked after death shall be delivered to a *second death* as a punishment for their sins³; and that they also believed that punishment to be eternal.⁴ And although this second death is not expressly mentioned in the oracles committed to them, yet it is contained in their received exposition of them.⁵ Moreover, this common belief of the Jews is confirmed by the authority of the New Testament, and sanctioned by the way in which their phrases are employed by our Lord and by His Apostles ; for example τὴν γέενναν,—τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον,⁶—ὃ ἐστὶ δεύτερος θάνατος.⁷

If therefore we narrow our inquiry and come to the New Testament, we suppose that few persons will admit that “a *very large majority* of the books” of that volume “are entirely silent upon the subject.”⁸ But this is not the question for us to deal

² Eccl. Pol. II. vii. 5. (Oxford 1841).

³ Pearson on the Creed, vol. i. p. 465 ; ii. n. 465, d. Bretschneider under αἰώνιος.

⁴ Campbell’s Diss. on γέεννα, vol. i. pp. 184, 185, note :—and Whitby on 2 Thess. Appendix.

⁵ Pearson and Whitby, as above.

⁶ Mark ix. 43, &c.

⁷ Rev. xxi. 8.

⁸ Ep. p. 490. There is scarcely any book which does not allude to a future state, and invariably the condition of the righteous

with now; we are concerned to know whether it be revealed or not in the New Testament that the future punishment of the wicked is eternal.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has declared to us in minute detail all the circumstances of the Last Judgment. The sentence of the Eternal Judge pronounced upon the ungodly is this, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire (τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον) prepared for the devil and his angels⁹;" and lest any one should imagine that the fire shall be eternal and the torments not, it is added, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."¹ Further, that there may be no room left for doubt, S. John, the 'disciple of love,' 'the channel of our Redeemer's higher revelations,'² is commissioned to inform us what that fire is, which "is prepared for the devil and his angels," and into which therefore the ungodly are to depart. Accordingly we read that "the smoke of their torment (βασανισμοῦ) ascendeth up for ever and ever:"³ and further "*the devil* that deceived them was cast

is declared to be happy, that of the wicked miserable; and *both are final*. Indeed this truth must always have been considered plain, as we may gather from the writings of the very earliest Fathers. Ep. ad Diognetum, xi. Bp. Kaye's Justin Martyr, p. 102, Tertullian, p. 347. Iren. ad. Hær. iv. 47.

⁹ Matth. xxv. 41. See also xiii. 40-42.

¹ Matth. xxv. 46. Pearson, vol. i. p. 463.

² Epilogue, p. 461.

³ The termination -σμός in the Greek indicates an *action during its continuance*: it is similar to the termination -ura in Latin. βασανισμός = tortura = tormenting.

into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.”⁴

If therefore we take our sacred books as we find them, it is quite plain that they are by no means *silent* as to the future destiny of the wicked. They certainly express that the wicked will hereafter be punished. Moreover, it is equally plain that all the promises and all the exhortations of Scripture imply that man’s *present* state of trial is *his final* and *decisive* one. There is not the slightest encouragement given in the Bible to expect that there will be any *future* relief, or that *future* reformation and repentance will restore the lost favor of God. There is no revelation of a Gospel *after* the Gospel: of a new dispensation of the Spirit, or of a new message of mercy, when God’s first message has been despised. Upon this subject, the testimony of

⁴ Rev. xiv. 11; xx. 10, καὶ βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. It was not well for the Writer of the Epilogue, merely to allude to S. Mark’s ‘unquenchable fire,’ (which by the way he always speaks of as πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον instead of τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον) and then to fix upon Matth. xxv. 46, as though it were the only other text which really related to the subject. The passage in the Book of Revelation is much stronger, for the expression ‘day and night’ is the same with that which declares the eternal happiness in the heavens, where “they rest not day and night (ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς) saying Holy, Holy, Holy.”—Rev. iv. 8, and vii. 15.—Besides, this doctrine is constantly referred to, as a motive to Christian duty and patience. (Mark iii. 28; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9). Not to mention that in one place (Jude v. 6.) the duration of the torments of wicked spirits is expressed by the classical Greek word for ‘everlasting,’ (see Liddell and Scott under αἰδῖος).

one who cannot be suspected of treating this subject with prejudice or partiality is worthy of the greatest attention. He observes, "On this point I acknowledge that my convictions are strong. I have long searched, with anxious solicitude, for a text in the Bible which would even seem to favor the idea of a *future* probation. I cannot find it."⁵ The awful nature of the conclusion that the punishment of a future world is to have no end, is fully admitted. But the question before us is one of fact and not of feeling. Do the Scriptures, as we receive them, or do they not, reveal this awful truth? Are they or are they not silent upon the subject? In this question (as in questions of conduct) if one side be doubtful, and the other be safe,⁶ we are bound to take the safe side.⁷ Assuredly it is the part of a reasonable man, no less than that of a pious Christian, to entrust his eternal destiny, and to teach others (so far as he may) to entrust theirs, to the certainties of God's Word, taking the account of the glories and the terrors of a future existence, as it has ever been received by the Church of Christ⁸; rather than to venture upon the uncertainties of a perilous criticism which may throw doubt upon received truths, but can give nothing real, nothing certain, nothing true in their place.

⁵ Moses Stuart, *Exegetical Essays*, &c. (Andover, 1830). p. 60.

⁶ 'If the universalists are right, we who believe in a very different doctrine from theirs are nevertheless just as safe as they.'—*Ibid.* p. 151.

⁷ Paley, vol. i. p. 34, (*Lond.* 1837.)

⁸ *Ep.* p. 497.

SECTION III.

Let us beware, therefore, good Christian people, lest that we, rejecting or casting away God's Word, (by the which we obtain and retain true faith in God), be not at length cast off so far that we become as the children of unbelief.—HOMILY VIII.

Forasmuch as it is the design of these pages exactly to follow the Writer of the Epilogue in his argument, we have so far taken for granted (as he too has done) that *all* that our English Bibles contain is a true version of the Word of God; and we have tried to shew that upon that supposition, the direct proofs of this doctrine from Holy Scripture are not so few nor so weak as he represents them. We must now change our ground, and proceed to consider the methods by which it is attempted to get rid of the substance or the sense of those passages which cannot be disposed of in any other way. The philological portion of the Writer's argument may be divided into two parts; first, the criticism by which the Author rejects phrases altogether, or tries to shew that they are not authentic, *i. e.* not what they profess to be; and secondly, the suggestion of new translations.

I. The Writer asserts that "the words (τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον, Mark ix. 43, 45) are rejected by some eminent critics as a spurious interpolation."⁹ This is

⁹ Is it a fair question to ask who these eminent critics are? Having made a long search for them in vain, we shall feel indebted to any one who may give a clue to their hiding-place.—pp. 490, 491.

a strong assertion to make without naming any authority. All editors of any note (it is believed without a single exception) retain the words in their text; and all editors of inferior authority to whom we have had access do the same. Indeed, on examining the grounds upon which the words are retained, it appears that as respects ver. 43, the words are found in all the most ancient versions except the Syriac,¹ and in all the manuscripts except L: as regards ver. 45, although the words are not contained in the ancient versions, yet they occur in all the manuscripts except B, C, and L.² It appears therefore that so far as authority goes, there are very slender grounds indeed to justify *any* critic in omitting these words from the sacred text. For if it may be questioned whether they ought to be *repeated* in ver. 45, at least there can be no reasonable doubt about retaining them in ver. 43.

¹ Bruder describes the Syriac version as ‘nobilissima omnium, jam sæculo II. confecta.’—See also Martin’s Preface to the edition of Trostius.

² B is the Vatican MS. of the 4th or 5th century; C is the Codex of Ephrem Cyrus of the 5th or 6th century; L is a MS. of the 8th century in the Royal Library at Paris, it contains the four Gospels only, and is defective in many places. The omission of the words in a manuscript of comparatively recent date is of very little importance. If however we were inclined to turn upon modern criticism with one of its own favourite weapons, we could *insinuate* (as a curious coincidence), that this MS. marked L, belongs to the age when the doctrine of Purgatory first began to gain a firm footing. There are manuscripts of a much later date, in which the words are omitted in one or other of the verses; but the copies which omit them in one verse retain them in the other.

The Writer next attempts to shew that the English version of Matthew xxv. 46, cannot be relied on as a correct representation of our Saviour's words; and for this reason, that the Greek itself cannot be trusted. He sets out with the inquiry "whether the words which our translators have thus given us, really correspond with the words which our Saviour Himself uttered?" and by way of making short work with this question, he at once asserts, "that no human being knows, or ever can know what were the very words which thus fell from the lips of Christ. They were spoken in a dialect of the Syro-Chaldaic."³ Of course, this reasoning goes to prove that our Gospels are not authentic, *i.e.* that they are not what they profess to be, when they relate to us anything that was uttered by our Blessed Lord!

Startling as this assertion will doubtless appear to most minds, it is in itself perhaps not so bad as it seems to be. If it be true that our Lord on this occasion spoke in the Aramaic dialect, as is most likely, (whether He did so or not is a point scarcely worth contending for,)⁴ then, so far as we can tell, no one now knows what were *the very* words that fell from His lips. Moreover, unless they are preserved in some manuscript hitherto unexplored, we may

³ p. 491. It will be noticed that this criticism must be extended to the whole of our Lord's personal teaching, as it is conveyed to us through the medium of the four Gospels. It would be a dangerous weapon in the hands of an Infidel; and perhaps he could not desire one better suited to his purpose.

⁴ See Appendix B.

even go so far as to admit that no one *ever can know* (at least without a special revelation) what these very words were. But how then does the Writer pretend to correct the received interpretation of certain words which all men know, by the help of certain other words which “no man knows, nor ever can know?” There would be some weight in his observation, if he could shew that there are Aramaic words which admit of being translated by the words *εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον*, but which have at the same time an usual meaning quite different from that of the Greek words. But surely it is a strange way of reasoning to argue that because no one knows what the Aramaic words are, therefore the Greek words are probably not a true version of them. For we may reasonably suppose that the words *εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον* can be translated into Aramaic, and that there are Aramaic words of which these would be a proper translation. In fact the Syriac version (which is the oldest and most valuable of all versions) does contain this passage of *S. Matthew*, and the eternal punishment into which the wicked must depart, is expressed by a word which in other places is used to express that God is eternal,⁵ and which is employed in this same passage to denote that the life of the righteous will endure for ever.

Furthermore, if we look at the matter in another light, it cannot after all be of great importance for us to know the *very* words which our Blessed Saviour uttered. Perhaps it was better for us that we should

⁵ *e.g.* 1 Tim. i. 17.

not know them. Perhaps it was over-ruled by the Providence of Almighty God that we should only have that substitute for them which He has preserved for us, lest, whilst we were too eagerly intent upon those words, we should forget THE WORD. For unless we suppose (which God forbid that we should suppose!) that the Holy Evangelists were unable or unwilling, even when inspired by the Holy Ghost for that very purpose, to give us in *any* language whatsoever a true and faithful record of our Lord's life and teaching, we must confess that our Greek Testament supplies us with all that a humble Christian ought to require. May we not add that with this Divine Book in our hands, it were far better with trembling awe to frame our lives after God's commandments, than with bold presumption to scrutinize its words in order to escape from the belief of an eternal future misery, which even reason itself leads us to anticipate.⁶?

The Writer proceeds to say, "No one even knows with any degree of certainty, whether our extant Greek Version of them proceeded from the pen of S. Matthew. On the hypothesis adopted by many high critical authorities of an intermediate Hebrew-Gospel, we must believe the contrary."⁷

Yet why "*must believe*"? The necessity is by no means inevitable, for some scholars who have studied the subject, believe that S. Matthew, who wrote the Hebrew Gospel, most probably wrote the Greek

⁶ Butler's Analogy, Part i. chap. 2.

⁷ Epilogue, p. 491.

Version of it also.⁸ Or even if another Apostle wrote the Greek Version, it does not in the least degree impair its Canonical authority.

But it is not necessary to state arguments for or against. The question whether S. Matthew be the author of the Greek Version as well as of the Hebrew Original, is a question which can only be *decided* by direct testimony; and at present that testimony is wanting. If therefore we allow that “no one knows with any certainty whether our extant Greek Version proceeded from the pen of S. Matthew,” we assert on the other hand, that no one knows with certainty that it did not. Most gladly we consent to leave the question enveloped in the obscurity in which we found it; but we would not willingly allow a mist of learned ignorance, (however luminous it may seem,) to be mistaken for the clear light of truth and demonstration. The Greek Gospel of S. Matthew possesses the same canonical authority, and claims from us the same reverent regard as the other sacred books; and we cannot think that it was well done on the part of the Writer of the Epilogue, (or that it will bear after-reflection,) that he has revived the discussion of a question, which has already been repeated ‘ad nauseam’; and that too in such a way as must almost necessarily induce persons of weak minds and slender information

⁸ Notes on the Gospels by F. M. p. 206, and note, “As we have,” &c.

to doubt whether that be truly God's Word, which (so far as we know) the Church of Christ has held to be so from the very first: and whether that be indeed the meaning of God's Word which all Christians have at all times believed to be so.⁹

II. It remains for us further to discuss the suggestions of new translations. In the first place the Writer declares that the Words τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον do not mean 'the fire that never shall be quenched,' but 'the inextinguishable fire.'¹ There is perhaps between these a shade of difference, but it is very little to the Writer's purpose. The word 'inextinguishable' means 'that which cannot be quenched,' and it does not seem to be more hopeful to look forward to a fire that never *can* be, than to one which never *shall* be quenched. The word ἄσβεστος occurs only in two other places in the New Testament (Matth. iii. 12, and Luke iii. 17,) and it is used in both as an epithet of fire which represents the punishment of the wicked.

In classical Greek the word seems to be used with a meaning such as 'unceasing,' 'without intermission,' ἄσβεστος πόρος ὠκεανοῦ 'the ceaseless flow of ocean.' (Liddell and Scott) In later writers it came to be used as a substantive, ἡ ἄσβεστος, 'unslacked lime,' and the meaning of it given in Ducange is 'calx viva.'

It appears therefore that no sufficient reason can be alleged, either from early or later usage, for calling

⁹ Epilogue, p. 497.

¹ Ep. pp. 490, 491.

in question the correctness of our authorized translation of the word ἄσβεστος. If we proceed to examine the passage in S. Mark, the meaning of the Evangelist will be cleared up and established by the context, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (ver. 46.) Moreover, if we assume that our Gospels furnish at all an accurate account of what our Lord delivered, (and it is presumed that we may venture to do this after what has been already said,) all doubt upon this subject will be dissipated by applying a rule of interpretation laid down by Archbishop Whateley. Without committing ourselves to all the consequences of this canon, we yet think that it may be applied with safety here. "There is a maxim," this Prelate observes, "relative to the right interpretation of Scripture, so obvious when stated, that it seems strange it should be so often overlooked; viz. to consider *in what sense the words were understood by the generality of persons they were addressed to*; and to keep in mind that the *presumption* is in favour of that, as the true sense, unless reasons to the contrary appear.

"Some are accustomed to consider, what sense such and such words can be *brought to bear*; or how *we* should be most naturally inclined to understand them: but it is evident that the point we have to consider,—if we would understand what it is that God did design to reveal,—is the sense (as far as we can ascertain it) which the very hearers of Christ and His Apostles did *actually* attach to His words. For we

may be sure, that if this was in any case a *mistaken* sense, a correction of the mistake (if it relate to any important practical point) will be found in some part of the Sacred Writings.”³

Let it be remembered then, that the Gospels at least give us the Evangelists’ version of our Lord’s words, and at least convey the sense in which they themselves understood them. Further also we may remark that if our Lord spoke in Aramaic, *i.e.* in a tongue which all His hearers could understand, this circumstance would be in itself a guarantee that the account of His discourses furnished by the Apostles *even in Greek* would be correct: for nothing could be easier than to appeal to others as to what was really said, and an outcry would of course be raised if the Apostles had falsified our Lord’s teaching by their Greek version of it. There was no doubt sufficient intercourse between persons who spoke both Greek and Aramaic, (as the better classes did,) and those who spoke Aramaic only, to prevent the possibility of Christians belonging to these two classes holding conflicting doctrines upon the same subject, based as they supposed on our Lord’s own words, without being mutually aware of it. Is not this consideration alone sufficient to assure us of the sense in which these words “were generally understood by those who heard them;” since we have at least the sense, which some of His hearers, and they Apostles and

³ Kingdom of Christ, p. 13. It is perhaps scarcely necessary to say that the *italics* are supplied by the Archbishop.

Evangelists, did *actually* attach to them? Can it be possible to entertain a doubt about the impression which our Lord's words must have produced? Even if they conveyed to the hearers the idea of an "inextinguishable fire," rather than that of a "fire which never can be quenched," could His meaning even in that case have been misunderstood? Is it credible that by using such words in such a connexion, or any words at all like them, He could have meant anything less than a state of eternal torment?

Again: the Writer suggests that the words *εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον* (Matth. xxv. 46) are not properly translated, "into everlasting punishment." He says that the words are "manifestly susceptible of the different meanings which so many scholars have at different times pointed out:"⁴ and then he offers two new renderings. The one is "into lifelong punishment;" the other "into perpetual abscission."⁵

With regard to the former of these renderings, we are naturally led to test it by the context. If we look to the other member of the sentence, we perceive that the words *εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον* are contrasted with *εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον*. If therefore we adopt the proposed translation, the entire sentence will run thus: "and these shall go away into lifelong punishment, but the

⁴ It would be an obligation conferred upon the literary world, if they were favoured with the names of these scholars.

⁵ In reading this part of the Epilogue, we are inclined to ask 'cui bono'? If no man living knows what our Lord's words are, why does the Writer trouble himself about *these* words? Does this imply some lurking distrust of his own hypothesis?

righteous into lifelong life." Perhaps it will not be thought necessary further to discuss the merits of this translation.

The second translation is almost as unsatisfactory as the first; and seems to be but little suited to the Writer's purpose. It appears that the word *κόλασις*, when applied to trees, means 'pruning.' Afterwards by a natural transition it passed into a metaphorical use, and came to mean 'a checking,' 'chastisement,' 'correction,' 'punishment.' The Writer seems to catch at this first meaning, and proposes to construe the word here by 'abscission.' It is believed that there is no real distinction between 'abscission' and 'pruning'; so that according to this emendation the text informs us that, after the general judgment, the wicked will be consigned to a perpetual 'abscission'⁶ or 'pruning.' It is true there is not much sense in this version, but it is submitted, that if the wicked are to be doomed to a perpetual process of 'abscission' or 'pruning,' then they will be condemned to an everlasting punishment: a conclusion which, it is believed, the Writer wishes to avoid.

The word *κόλασις* occurs only in one other place of the New Testament; viz. 1 John iv. 18, *ὁ φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει*. In our authorized translation these words are rendered, 'fear hath torment'; and it

⁶ We cannot bring ourselves to suppose that by "abscission," the Writer means the *state* and not the *act* of separation. The word (wherever it has yet appeared) is never used in the former sense, in either classic or hellenistic Greek.

is presumed that no one would seriously propose to translate, "fear hath abscission;" and still less, "fear hath pruning."

Once more then let us apply the rule twice laid down by Archbishop Whateley. "There is indeed no one of the recorded actions and expressions of our Lord and of His Apostles, that may not be explained away by an ingenious critic, who should set himself to do so, and who should proceed like a legal advocate, examining every possible sense in which some law or precedent that makes against his client, may be interpreted. But again, there is hardly one of these passages which can be thus explained away, without violating the maxim above laid down; viz. that we should consider not *any* interpretation whatever that such and such words can bear, but what notion they conveyed, and must have been known to convey, to the hearers at the time. For if this were a mistaken notion, an untrue sense, it follows inevitably that Christ and His Apostles must have been *teachers* of falsehood, even though their words should be capable of a different and true signification."⁷

Looking at the words in this view, they are neither 'ambiguous' nor 'equivocal.' Apart from all *a priori* considerations of whether the doctrine be probably true or false, whether it be fraught with horror or the contrary, whether it be an opinion of the few or of

⁷ Kingdom of Christ, p. 25.

the many, a doctrine of the Church or not, the sense of the passage as it stands in our Greek Testaments is plain. If we possess anything like a correct report of what our Lord said, we can feel no doubt about the notion which words such as these must have "been known to convey to the hearers at the time." The contrast between 'everlasting life' on the one hand, and 'everlasting punishment' on the other, could not be mistaken. If the faithful followers of the Redeemer are encouraged by Him to hope for a reward of everlasting life, the impenitent sinner is no less surely forewarned of that penalty of everlasting punishment, which is emphatically declared by the other side of this awful antithesis. There is no alternative: and whilst we are compelled to draw this conclusion by the text now under consideration, there is no other passage of Holy Writ which corrects, but many which confirm, the impression derived from this one. For, 'if these words were capable of a different and a true signification,' it is plain that the notion which they obviously convey, and have in times past conveyed to almost all readers, is a false one; and therefore we must conclude by Archbishop Whateley's rule, that the Apostles under such circumstances would be *teachers of falsehood*.⁸

But it may be well to consider more particularly the meaning of the word *αἰώνιος* in this place; a word

⁸ It is not easy to believe that the Writer would have met with the same difficulties of translation, if he had found these words in any other author.

which the Writer translates indifferently, 'life-long' and 'perpetual.' Beyond contradiction the word has some meaning, and the two meanings proposed are not so far consistent with each other that either of them may be used in the same sentence for the other. It remains then to fix the true meaning of the word, so far as is possible; and for this purpose it will be necessary to consider the use of it in other parts of the New Testament.

Fortunately this investigation has already been gone through in a most complete way. All the places of the New Testament in which it occurs have been collated with the utmost care and accuracy, and the various meanings of which it is susceptible have been arranged and classified; and that too with special reference to the doctrine of future punishment. But since this subject is very trite, and familiar to Biblical students, it will be enough for our purpose to furnish the results which others have arrived at.

First then, with regard to *αἰών*, the noun from which the adjective *αἰώνιος* is derived. "Unless we except Luke i. 70,⁹ there is no case in which *αἰών* is employed in order to designate simply a *definite, limited period*, in all the New Testament; I mean there is no case of this nature, where *αἰών* is employed with the intention of conveying the simple idea of

⁹ τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος προφητῶν. ἀπ' αἰῶνος = 'antiquitus.' Mr. Stuart says, 'this can scarcely be excepted, as it is a clear case of employing *αἰών* in a manner designating an *indefinite* kind of period.'

duration, or time during which anything shall continue to exist or to be done."¹

Secondly, "In regard to all the cases of *αἰώνιος* which have a relation to future time, it is quite plain and certain that they designate *an endless period, an unlimited duration*. I except of course, for the present, those seven cases which have respect to future punishment. But in regard to the rest, if they have not the meaning which has just been stated, then the Scriptures do not decide that God is eternal; nor that the happiness of the righteous is without end; nor that His covenant of grace will always remain: a conclusion which would for ever blast the hopes of Christians, and shroud in more than midnight darkness all the glories of the Gospel."²

When we have to ascertain the meaning of any phrase or word in the New Testament, it must never be forgotten that Alexandrine Greek was the language of Hebrew Theology before our Lord's appearing. The version of the LXX unavoidably adopted certain Greek words to express ideas which had never before been conveyed by them, and by a common consent these words soon passed current under their new signification. In this way it came to pass that words were employed in a manner which was utterly unintelligible to those who knew the language only in its pure form: but at the same time they were

¹ Moses Stuart, *Inquiry, &c.*, p. 38. For proof of these conclusions the reader is referred to the work from which they are taken.

² *Ibid.* p. 46.

perfectly well understood by all who possessed the key to their meaning. Perhaps it was by overlooking this consideration that the Writer of the Epilogue was led to adopt the strange hypothesis that our translators suffered their judgment to be warped by the influence of Ecclesiastical Tradition.³ This is a most unwarrantable supposition for any one to make who is at all acquainted with our translation or its Authors. In fact it is well known to the most superficial student of sacred literature, that the Alexandrine Greek is by no means peculiar to the New Testament. The Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament, the writings of Philo and Josephus, the Book of Enoch, the Testament of the twelve Patriarchs, the Psalter of Solomon,⁴ and other such writings, are the sources to which the Biblical student must have recourse to find out the meanings of words which have acquired a theological and technical sense. Accordingly, if we open any Lexicon of the New Testament (as for example Schleusner's or Bretschneider's) which professes to give the result of labours in this field of literature, we find no doubt whatever as to the meaning either of *αἰώνιος* or *κόλασις*. Thus, for *αἰώνιος* we have the meanings, 'qui semper erit', 'qui nunquam finem habebit,' 'sempiternus,' 'perpetuus'; and 'qui semper fuit et erit,' 'æternus'; and for *κόλασις*, 'castigatio,' 'cruciatu'; with copious references to the Septuagint and to the Apocryphal Books, to Josephus, &c.⁵: but we find nothing about 'life-long' or 'abscission.'

³ Ep. p. 497. ⁴ Preface to Bretsch. Lex. of N. T. ⁵ Bretsch. sub voce.

SECTION IV.

Διαμαρτυρόμενος ἐνώπιον τοῦ Κυρίου μὴ λογομαχεῖν εἰς οὐδὲν χρήσιμον, ἐπὶ καταστροφῇ τῶν ἀκουόντων.—2 Tim. ii. 14.

PERHAPS this is the proper place to consider the difficulty of translating abstract terms from one language into another. The writer says :

“ Assuming however that the hand of an inspired writer did trace the very words *εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον*, it will yet not necessarily follow that either of these words is a precise equivalent for the original which it represents; because for terms so abstract perfectly precise equivalents can seldom, if ever, be found in languages so essentially dissimilar in their structure and genius as the Syro-Chaldaic and the Greek.”

The question thus opened is one simply philological. Is there or is there not the extreme difficulty here alleged in translating abstract terms from one language to another?

No doubt the greatest difficulty in translating from one language to another is that which arises from the peculiar circumstances and situation of the different people by whom the languages are spoken. “ It is evident that whatever regards the religion, the laws, the constitution and the manners of a people operates powerfully on their sentiments; and these have a principal effect, first on the association of ideas formed in their minds in relation to character, and to whatever is an object of abstract reflexion; secondly on the forma-

tion of words, and combination of phrases by which these associations are expressed.”⁶

Words have been accordingly divided into three classes: “There are certain words, in every language, to which there are other words perfectly corresponding in other languages. There are certain words in every language, which but imperfectly correspond to any of the words of other languages. There are certain words in every language to which there is nothing in some other languages in any degree correspondent.”⁷

Now we are concerned with words of the second class. With regard to them the following inquiries suggest themselves. By what criterion may these words be distinguished, that we may know them when we meet with them? Are the words *κόλασις* and *αἰώνιος* of this class? Lastly, is it impossible so to translate such words, that we may be sure we are in possession of the sentiment which they are employed to convey?

1. By what characteristics are these words distinguished? “Of this kind will be found, if properly attended to, most of the terms relating to morals, to the passions and matters of sentiment, or to the objects of the reflex and internal senses, in regard to which it is often impossible to find words in one language, that are exactly equivalent to those of another. This holds in all languages less or more, according as there is more or less uniformity in the constitution, religion, and laws of the nations whose languages are com-

⁶ Campbell, Dis. II. p. 54.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 54, 55.

pared; on which constitution, religion, and laws, as was observed, the sentiments, manners, and customs of the people in great measure depend.”⁸

2. The words *κόλασις* and *αἰώνιος* do in some sense come under this general head, though not strictly so. For inasmuch as these words have two meanings, the one original, and the other derived, it becomes needful to decide which of the two in any particular instance must be chosen. For example, it is necessary to determine whether *κόλασις* means ‘pruning’ or ‘punishment.’ But it is tolerably plain that the constitution and religion and laws of nations, which are mainly influential in producing the ambiguity of words now under consideration, can have little effect upon the meaning of these words.

3. But even if we allow that precise equivalents cannot be found, does it follow that it is impossible to translate the words so as to render the sense which they were intended to convey? By no means; for the difficulty in these cases is commonly a difficulty of degree. Some of the words in one language, for instance, have a wider or a more contracted signification than the words which most nearly correspond to them in the other. Or whilst the *general* idea conveyed by corresponding words is the same, the particular modification of the idea as regards intensity may be different. For example, *ἀρετή*, ‘virtus,’ and ‘virtue’; also ‘mœror,’ ‘dolor,’ and ‘luctus’ differ by shades of meaning which a paraphrase only can

⁸ Campbell, p. 56, et seq.

convey. Thus even in those cases, in which exact equivalents cannot be found, it is possible to approximate very closely to the true meaning, though it is not correct to say that the exact meaning is accurately attained. The degree of closeness to which the approximation is carried will depend upon the translator's acquaintance with the constitution, religion, and laws of the two nations. Yet in all cases, or at least with a very rare exception, a candid and intelligent person may satisfy himself as to the true meaning which the words were designed to express.

If then a person of common information is able to translate words of this class from one language into another, faithfully at least, if not with strict exactness, and to produce reasons in support of his rendering intelligible and satisfactory to all who are able to comprehend them; we dare not for one moment doubt that an inspired Writer⁹ was able to find words which fitly represent our Blessed Lord's teaching upon this important subject. The question is not whether each Greek word is an exact equivalent to some Aramaic word which our Saviour may or may not have spoken, but whether they convey the meaning which He intended them to bear. If they do *not* convey that meaning, it is hard to understand in what way they can be looked upon as inspired at all. If they do convey that meaning, then surely we may leave all

⁹ p. 491. Can it be that the Writer seriously intended to suggest this doubt?

niceties about mere verbal equivalency, and confess the truth of that old maxim, “Nec putemus in verbis Scripturarum esse Evangelium, sed in sensu. Non in superficie, sed in medullâ. Non in sermonum foliis, sed in radice rationis.”¹

SECTION V.

Why the Author of Nature does not give his creatures promiscuously such and such perceptions, without regard to their behaviour; why he does not make them happy without the instrumentality of their own actions, and prevent their bringing any sufferings upon themselves, is another matter. Perhaps there may be some impossibilities in the nature of things which we are unacquainted with.—BUTLER.

THE plan of that part of the Epilogue which we are now considering is this: to shew first, by the help of criticism, that the Doctrine of Future Punishment is not fixed by Holy Scripture, and then to determine what it is by a consideration of probabilities. It is believed that the criticism of the Writer has been proved to be without foundation: it remains further to examine the probabilities which are alleged against the commonly received doctrine.

1. It is argued that since this doctrine forms no *necessary* substratum of any other Christian doctrine, therefore it is not probable that it would be revealed as an isolated truth.²

In the first place it is submitted that the consideration of the Writer is of no value, unless we

¹ Jerome on Gal. i.

² Ep. pp. 492, 493.

have a more direct test of *isolation* than we have of *truth*: that is, unless it be more easy to ascertain whether a doctrine be isolated, than it is to judge whether it be true. Now it is commonly believed that we possess a test by which we can judge whether a thing be true; a test which is accessible to all. For example, we believe a doctrine to be true, because we assent to it as a thing credible: and we judge it to be credible, when it is attested to us by its proper evidence. All therefore that we have to assume is, that there is an evidence proper to every particular thing which we are called upon to believe, and our business is to sift that evidence. On the other hand, it is very difficult to assign a simple criterion of isolation. In order to be able to affirm that a thing is isolated, we ought to possess a thorough and intimate acquaintance with the entire system to which it is referred. For instance, if with reference to the Christian system we say that a doctrine is isolated, we must do so upon a thorough consideration of all the parts and details of the scheme of Christianity itself. In all cases therefore we can judge of evidence, in few cases (if in any) are we in circumstances to judge of isolation. All men can examine whether a doctrine of Christianity be true, but no man can affirm, without seeming presumption, that it is isolated. Plainly therefore it is more reasonable to inquire whether a doctrine be true, than to assert that it is isolated. For, apart from other considerations, no truth can be isolated, however

it may on a partial view seem to be so.³ All truths are so united together by the bond of their common verity, that no truth can be spared; forasmuch as all rest upon one unchanging foundation, (the eternal distinction between truth and falsehood), and if one truth could by demonstration be proved to be false, all truth would be destroyed. If therefore we deny the doctrine to be isolated, because we believe it to be true, as a mere matter of argument there seems to be no reason why such denial is not entitled to as much weight as the Writer's assertion.

Secondly, considering the line of argument adopted in the Epilogue, it becomes important to maintain that this truth is a necessary substratum of other Christian doctrines. For the Writer attempts to set aside the Scriptural proof of the doctrine, by asserting that it is impossible to know what Christ really said; so that, if it were thought necessary or desirable to blot out of God's Book any other doctrine, the same method could be resorted to. It would be just as easy in that case to invent unheard-of translations, to suggest critical doubts, and to magnify the difficulties of translation, as it was in this. The same artifice which is brought in to destroy the foundation of this doctrine can be readily employed to destroy the foundation of any other, if not to banish objective

³ Bishop Butler observes, that "things seemingly the most insignificant imaginable are perpetually observed to be necessary conditions to other things of the greatest importance; so that any one thing whatever may, for ought we know to the contrary, be a necessary condition to any other."—*Analogy*, I. vii.

meaning from Holy Scripture altogether. Hence though it was a necessary article of Christian faith before, the Writer has made it almost fundamental now, by choosing it as the object of his peculiar mode of assault.

Thirdly, it is most justly said by the Writer that "each of the main truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures is an integral part of the system to which it belongs." This truth claims no less importance: for, as we maintain, it is written in Scripture and embodied in the Creed, so that a Christian man could not acknowledge that system to be Christianity of which it forms no part.

Lastly, the belief of this truth has been thought necessary,

(1.) "To deter us from committing sin, and to quicken us to holiness of life, and a speedy repentance for sin committed."

(2.) "To breed in us a fear and awe of the great God, a jealous God, a consuming fire, a God that will not be mocked; and to teach us to tremble at His word, to consider the infinity of His justice, and the fierceness of His wrath, to meditate on the power of His menaces and the validity of His threats, to follow that direction, to embrace that reduplicated advice of our Saviour, '*I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear.*'"⁴

(3.) "To teach us to make a fit estimate of the price of Christ's blood, to value sufficiently the work

⁴ Luke xii. 5.

of our redemption, to acknowledge and admire the love of God to us in Christ.”⁵

Since then the belief of this doctrine is necessary,—necessary, because it is a truth, because it rests on the same foundation with other revealed truths, because it is an essential part of Christianity,—necessary also as a motive to duty and to a thankful remembrance of the benefits of Christ’s passion: we cannot but conclude (notwithstanding the Epilogue) that it was most worthy of our Blessed Lord, as “a merciful and a faithful High Priest,”⁶ that He should promulgate a truth of such momentous importance to us all.

2. The next probability is derived from the supposition that the doctrine in question cannot be reconciled with the angelic announcement of ‘good tidings of great joy which should be to all people.’

If the argument of the Writer prove anything, it proves either that the angelic message is not true, or that the wicked ought not to be punished at all for rejecting the Gospel. For if the preaching of the Gospel brings with it any responsibility peculiarly its own; if there be any sin in rejecting the Gospel, and men become amenable to punishment or to suffering on account of that sin; in other words, if it shall be “more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment” than for those who hear of God’s mercy in Christ and despise it; if it be indeed the reason of “condemnation, that light has come into the world, and

⁵ Pearson on the Creed, vol. i. p. 470.

⁶ Heb. ii. 17.

⁷ Epilogue, p. 493.

men love darkness rather than light ;"—then, according to the principles laid down in the Epilogue, the Angel's message is no good news, but rather tidings of unutterable sorrow !

But how stands the case in reality ? We behold a world dead in trespasses and sins ; wicked and therefore miserable, "without God," and therefore "without hope." We are assured that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."⁸ He had before sent His Prophets to warn the wicked from the error of their way, and afterwards He sent His Son to be a sacrifice for sins, and to be an example of holy living. He charged Apostles to teach, to preach, and to baptize. Moreover the Gospel is not a light "to be hid under a bushel," but "to be placed on a candlestick ;" it is not a message to be whispered in the ears of a few, but to be proclaimed from the house-top to all men. All who hear are invited to believe and to be saved ; all who thirst are bidden to take of the water of life freely ; all who lack understanding may be supplied from the fountain of wisdom ; all who are weary may come and find rest. The terms are indeed gracious :—"Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."⁹

Are these good tidings ? If we understand the Writer, he says that to most men they are not ! It is true that God sends first His servants and then

⁸ John iii. 16.

⁹ Matt. vii. 7.

His Son; but why are men permitted to persecute the former, and to crucify the latter?¹ It is true that the message is most gracious; but why are men left to the choice of despising it? It is true that light is come into the world; but why are men condemned for preferring darkness? It is true there is a narrow way of life, and there is also a broad road to destruction:—but men love the way of death, and hate the way of life! Are we then to infer (as the Writer seems to do), that the Gospel is no glad tidings to them, and that the Angel's message is mockery to them? Is not this to espouse the cause of the unthankful and the disobedient, and that in the worst way of all? Is not this to ask why Almighty God hath not made us wiser and better and more perfect than we are?²

It is quite true that to the condemned the final result of the message is no benefit, but rather an unspeakable loss: nevertheless the original message is a message of mercy to all who hear it, unless the Writer is prepared to charge Almighty God with insincerity. “For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”³ Moreover it is written of those who reject the counsel of God against themselves, “Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life;” and “Ye judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life.”⁴

¹ Matt. xxvi. 24. John xix. 11.

² Butler's Sermon upon the Ignorance of Man, p. 197.

³ John iii. 17, &c.

⁴ John v. 40. Acts xiii. 46.

If therefore we reflect how greatly the extent of God's love and compassion aggravates the enormity of man's enmity and obstinate ingratitude, we must allow that the probability is fearfully in favour of the truth of the received doctrine.

3. The next probability is put in the form of a question. After speaking of the merciful designs of Redemption, so repeatedly expressed by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Writer asks, "Is it reasonable to accept any construction of the other words of Christ which would seem to ascribe to the Spirit of Evil an eternal triumph over the Spirit of Good, in the persons of the vast majority of those whom He lived and died to redeem?"⁵ Most gladly will we give the Writer the full benefit of any answer which a pious Christian can return to this question.

May we however ask in reply, Is it reasonable to call the execution of God's righteous sentence against transgressors, a triumph of the spirit of evil over the Spirit of Good? Does the Writer seriously imagine that the Devil, who is the spirit of evil, will then achieve a triumph, when he and his angels are finally and for ever sentenced to the chains and torments of the bottomless pit?⁶ Does the spirit of evil triumph in his destruction, because wicked men are involved in the same ruin; and because they, who deluded themselves and were deceived by him, are doomed "to receive in themselves" the final recompense which is the inevitable consequence of sin? Does the

⁵ Ep. p. 494.

⁶ Rev. xx. 10.

spirit of evil triumph, when the besotted votary of pleasure runs riot in his career of debauchery until the certain, perhaps the anticipated results ensue,—until he stamps upon his person the indelible brand of ignominy, or plants in his constitution the seeds of loathsome disease? Surely it is a strange way of speaking to say that when evil is condemned to be punished, then evil triumphs! Can we indeed judge it to be anything less (if it be nothing more) than an abuse of language to suggest that the spirit of evil triumphs, when the full tide of retribution for wilful and unrepented sin sets in; when those bitter consequences ensue, which the Author of Good has inseparably connected with it; when the undying worm fastens upon its victim, and the unquenchable fire begins to burn,—a worm which is bred, and a fire which is kindled by the accumulated corruptions of a sinful life?

Nor may we question that awful prospects await those who are disobedient and unbelieving, even though for them also Christ died.⁷ Analogies are not wanting which shew that this is credible; as when it pleases Almighty God to preserve and sometimes even to rescue those in early life, who afterwards grow up to be a terror to others, or to be wretched themselves. “Secret things belong to God, things that are revealed to us and to our children.”⁸ It is enough for us to know that “he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that be-

⁷ See Rom. xiv. 15. 1 Cor. viii. 11.

⁸ Deut. xxix. 29.

lieveth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”⁹ Perhaps, therefore, we may be permitted to leave it for others to consider, whether the spirit of evil triumphs over the spirit of good in the person of those upon whom “the wrath of God abideth.”¹

4. The fourth probability is drawn from a consideration of the analogies of the Divine government. It is remarked that “nothing terminates on evil:” and because we observe so many of the provisions of God’s government in this life to be remedial, it is inferred, that future punishment will also be remedial and transient, not penal and eternal.²

In reply to this consideration it is submitted that we cannot safely argue from the analogies of the Divine government. For ‘since the monarchy of the universe is a dominion unlimited in extent and everlasting in duration, the general system of it must necessarily be quite beyond our comprehension.’³ Indeed we see so small a portion of it in this world, and the view which we take is so partial and confused, that we have in truth very little upon which to found a judgment concerning the whole. It seems therefore to be unsound to argue as the Writer does from what we see of God’s dealings now, to what they will be hereafter. The present remedial dispensation is

⁹ John iii. 36.

¹ Cum enim scriptum sit, *Universæ viæ Domini, misericordia et veritas*, nec injusta ejus gratia, nec crudelis potest esse justitia.—Augustine.

² Epilogue, p. 493.

³ Butler.

allowed on all hands to be the prelude to another state, since Holy Scripture gives us a certain assurance that that state will be *final*; and if so, it cannot be remedial. Moreover we have no infallible grounds of demonstration, independently of Holy Scripture, by which to decide what the whole design of the probationary dispensation is, or to determine what that future state will be.

But although the analogies of the Divine government fail to assist us, we may fairly appeal to the analogies of human government. The Writer himself appeals to human feeling as a test of what is fitting in the Divine government; and therefore we may not unfairly use such analogies as the almost universally acknowledged principles of human government and justice afford us. Now according to Cicero there are eight kinds of punishment found in the laws,—fine, imprisonment, stripes, restitution, disgrace, banishment, death, slavery. These punishments are plainly of two kinds: some are remedial and intended for correction, others are penal and designed for the destruction of the offender. The law therefore has hope of some persons that they may be recovered; others it regards as incorrigible: the former it corrects, the latter it puts out of the way. A member of the body may become so diseased that remedies are applied in vain, and this is true of society as well as of an individual. Moreover, so far as this life permits, some punishments of the law are eternal; for exile and slavery, which in many cases are penalties never to be

relaxed, are only not eternal, because this life is not eternal; and the first death in this world answers to the second death in the world to come.³ Since then under human government some are in measure corrected by fine, imprisonment, and the like; whilst others receive judgment without mercy by death, exile, or slavery; and the law in both cases is supposed to attain its end: therefore under the Divine monarchy we may expect to find the same things and to meet with penal as well as with remedial procedures. For we cannot doubt that the end of all government will be at length attained, when every man hereafter has received the final and irreversible sentence of justice according to his works, whether they be good or whether they be bad.⁴

5. An appeal is next made to the moral sentiments implanted in us by Almighty God. It is insinuated that the commonly received construction of our Lord's words is repugnant to our own 'natural sense of justice and equity.'⁵

It is no doubt true that in all questions of conduct, a simple appeal to conscience, in the case of a plain honest man, will meet with a response on the side of truth and virtue in almost any circumstance.⁶ But the case is widely different in matters of doctrine, and especially when self-interest can come in. For any particular thing may be agreeable to the principle

³ August. de Civ. Dei, xxi. 11.

⁴ Rom. ii. 5—8.

⁵ Epilogue, pp. 494, 495.

⁶ Butler, Sermon III., upon Human Nature, pp. 30, 31.

which for a time happens to be strongest, and yet be quite disproportionate to human nature. In fact our moral judgment may be too much influenced by the prevalency of compassion ; or it may be warped in the opposite direction by a strong feeling of resentment. Under these circumstances it must be very dangerous to repose implicit, or even very great confidence in the moral decisions of others or of ourselves. For in matters which are by some made the subjects of speculative and probable opinion, we ought not to depend upon the intensity of our own moral feeling of approbation or aversion, nor upon the majority of the votes of others. We must look deeper than this. We must distinguish between the *mere power* which a moral presentiment of complacency or aversion does actually exert over us, and the *authority* which it *ought* to exercise, if it were allowed only to have its legitimate sway. So that, in judging of this doctrine, our feelings of compassion and horror ought to be tempered by considerations of the inscrutable justice and mercy of Almighty God.

In order that anything approaching to a final appeal may be made to the decisions of the "law written in our hearts," there ought to be something like unanimity of sentiment as to what that law really is. It cannot be necessary to remind the Writer of the Epilogue how various the opinions upon this subject have been. It may be enough to mention the moral systems of Mandeville, of Hobbes, of Hume, and of Paley, (each of which, with many others, propounds

an independent principle as the foundation of moral distinctions and of human conduct,) in order to shew that no great dependence can be placed upon this appeal. It is impossible to decide the matter by any appeal to a 'natural sense of justice and equity,' when some men deny that there is any such natural sense at all, and the rest of mankind are not agreed as to what it is.

Besides, the appeal is not upon a simple question of justice. We are not here called upon to decide whether sin committed in this life may justly be punished in another life, but to determine how great the punishment ought to be, and how long it ought to endure. Now in the first place, we are not in a situation to determine much about the guilt of sin, *i.e.* to decide how guilty and how enormous it really is; and in the second place, we are not informed what the punishment of sin will be, (for all that the Bible tells us is that it is a punishment, and that it is severe,) so that without knowing what there is in either scale, we are yet invited to adjust the balance, and to determine, upon 'natural principles of justice and equity,' which of the scales ought to preponderate.

But let us examine this appeal more closely. Future punishment may be regarded under two aspects; first as to its intensity, and then as to its duration. Now, as was before remarked, it is impossible for us to judge whether the intensity of the punishment does or does not exactly answer to the demerit of the crime. If therefore there seem to be an injustice in making

future punishment eternal, it must be because a sin which was committed in a short time is punished for a long time.⁷ But it is scarcely necessary to point out the fallacy of this judgment. For the most heinous crimes (as murder or sacrilege) may be perpetrated almost in a moment of time. Hence the guilt of a sin cannot be measured by the time occupied in the commission of it; and by parity of reason, we cannot measure the guiltiness of a sinful life by its length, aggravated as it is in most instances by obstinate perseverance in crime in spite of the checks of conscience and the warnings of reflexion. Indeed the justice of the Divine procedure in this behalf has been put in terms which carry with them an irresistible force of demonstration: "There is not only no just retribution rendered in this life to man, but considering the ordinary condition of things, it cannot be. For it is possible, and often cometh to pass, that one man may commit such sins as all the punishments in this life can no way equalize them. It is just that he who sheddeth man's blood, by man his blood should be shed: but what death can retaliate the many murders committed by one notorious pirate, who may cast many thousands overboard; or the rapines and assassinations of one rebel or tyrant, who may destroy whole nations? It is fit that he that blasphemeth God should die; but what equivalent punishment can he receive in this life, who shall constantly blaspheme the name of God, destroy His priests and temples,

⁷ Augustine de Civ. xxi. 11.

abolish His worship, and extirpate His servants? What is then more proper, considering the providence of a most just God, than to believe that man shall suffer in another life such torments as will be proportionable to his demerits.”⁸

6. It is alleged that the doctrine is probably not true, because so few of mankind seem really to believe it,⁹ because men occupy themselves with things comparatively trivial, instead of being wholly taken up (as we might expect them to be) with the all-absorbing horrors of this terrible anticipation.

The same argument holds with equal force against the truth of Christianity in general. For although the Christian religion discloses the only sure way to happiness in the next life, men for the most part utterly disregard its precepts, and lightly esteem its promises. Yet all will allow that future happiness is a thing of the greatest concernment to the human family. If its importance were duly estimated, men would not be so indifferent about it as they plainly are. Must we then argue that the hopes of Christianity are without foundation and its promises untrue, because so many disbelieve them, and because they do not exercise that practical influence upon our own hearts which they ought to do? Are we to invert the terms of the question of the Epilogue and press it home upon the Writer in another form? “Let any honest man fairly propose to himself, and fairly answer the question, whether the unutterable dis-

⁸ Pearson on the Creed, vol. i. p. 445.

⁹ Ep. p. 495.

parity between his actual interest in all the frivolities of life, and his professed belief in an eternity of bliss, prepared possibly for himself, and certainly for all those who live and die in the faith and fear of God, does not convict him of professing to believe more than he actually believes? And if so, is there not some reason to doubt whether he has not erred in attributing to his Saviour a meaning for which after all he cannot find any real place in his own mind, or any vital influence upon his own heart?"¹

Now if a person were seriously to bring forward such an argument as this, it would not be uncharitable to conclude that he was making a cloke to conceal his own insincerity. For it is quite evident that the eternity of future joy (no less than that of future punishment) is a matter of fact, and must be judged of, as other matters of fact are, by the evidence which can be produced to prove its truth. If it be a fact, it is of little consequence whether men believe it or not, except so far as they themselves are concerned. It cannot therefore cease to be a fact, because while they profess to believe it, the whole tenor of their lives gives the lie to their profession.

And this one consideration, if duly weighed, seems to be a sufficient answer to all the probabilities against the truth of the doctrine of eternal future punishment, which are put forward in the Epilogue. The real question at issue is, whether the doctrine be revealed

¹ Ep. p. 496.

in Holy Scripture or not. If it is not revealed, the question is at an end. If it is revealed, then we must accept or reject together the truth and the revelation which discloses it. All middle courses are equivocal and evasive. If a revelation be of any value, it is because it teaches the truth, and it ceases to be a revelation to us the moment we think ourselves at liberty to choose or to reject any part of it as we like. Indeed a revelation which contains nothing but matter for doubt and conjecture, the terms of which are so vague and ambiguous that they must be explained by probabilities which may be counterbalanced by opinions equally probable, is in truth little better than no revelation at all.

The Writer so often enlarges upon the horrors of the doctrine of eternal future punishment, that it excites a suspicion that his arguments are directed to men's feelings rather than to their judgments. For example, he doubts whether any man really believes the doctrine, because he thinks that no human mind and no mortal body could sustain the bare anticipation of such impending terrors.² But the Writer seems to forget, that the inevitable consequences of sin even in this life are very dreadful, though they are not the less painful or real because they are dreadful: and the very fact that sin is neces-

² There are instances on record to shew that men have sunk under the sense of these horrors, and died in consequence. Yet the Writer must be well aware that most men forget, rather than disbelieve this and other important doctrines.

sarily attended with such consequences here raises an almost irresistible presumption that the same law may be carried on farther towards perfection hereafter, so that the same results will follow the same vicious courses not sometimes but always.³ Moreover it is plain that men are not deterred from the commission of sin by the prospect of its dreadful consequences in this life, (and no one, who is even superficially acquainted with human life, can underrate the horrors of these consequences,) but yet the Writer cannot suppose that men are not aware or that they do not believe that such consequences will follow, although this certain knowledge and belief produces no practical results. Not to mention that the same sort of reasoning might be used with reference to the wretchedness of the lunatic asylums in this country a century ago, or the miseries of the Black Hole at Calcutta, or any other frightful calamity; they would be too horrible to be believed, if we did not know that they are true.

Furthermore it is suggested by the Writer that if the doctrine were true, no man could possibly engage in anything useful or entertaining for fear of the impending evil. Many doubtless esteem it far less worthy of their attention than it really is; but forasmuch as by God's unspeakable mercy a remedy is revealed fully commensurate with the evil, we need not resign ourselves to the influence of hopeless apathy or morbid amazement. Rather let each one

³ Butler, Analogy I. 2.

(as the Writer seems to recommend) examine his belief by his practice: and in this exhortation at least we might cordially sympathise with him, if it were calculated to awaken the careless, and not rather (as it too plainly is) to encourage the sceptical.

After all, who does not perceive that the frame of mind here described is a very common form of self-deceit? Indifference does not so much argue that men do not really believe in an eternity of future woe, as that they hope to escape it. "It is too evident that many persons allow themselves in very unjustifiable courses, who yet make great pretences to religion.....and go on thus with a sort of tranquillity and quiet of mind. This cannot be upon a thorough consideration and full resolution, that the pleasures and advantages they propose are to be pursued at all hazards, against reason, against the law of God, and though everlasting destruction is to be the consequence. This would be doing too great violence upon themselves. No, they are for *making a composition with the Almighty*. These of His commands they will obey:³ but as to others, why they will make all the atonement in their power.⁴.....Indulgences before, and atonements afterwards are all the same. And here perhaps come in faint hopes that they may, and half-resolves that they will one time or other make a change."⁵

³ Some part of His word too they will believe.

⁴ Or, resort to all the evasions they can think of.

⁵ Butler. Sermon on the character of Balaam, pp. 84, 85.

“When men hear the vice and folly⁶ of what is in truth their own course of life, exposed in the justest and strongest manner, they will often assent to it, and even carry the matter further; persuading themselves one does not know how, but some way or other persuading themselves, that they are out of the case, and that it hath no relation to them. . . . And if this be the case, it is much the same as if we should suppose a man to have had a general view of some scene, enough to satisfy him that it was very disagreeable, and then to shut his eyes, that he might not have a particular or distinct view of all its deformities. It is as easy to close the eyes of the mind as those of the body: and the former is more frequently done with wilfulness, and yet not attended to, than the latter; the actions of the mind being more quick and transient than those of the senses.”⁷

This is a sufficiently particular and true account of the reason why so few men live up to their belief, and none live according to their prayers.

⁶ And the consequences.

⁷ Butler. Sermon on Self-deceit, pp. 124, 125.

SECTION VI.

Pœna æterna ideo dura et injusta sensibus videtur humanis, quia in hâc infirmitate moribundorum sensuum deest ille sensus altissimæ purissimæque sapientiæ quo sentiiri possit quantum nefas in illâ primâ prævaricatione commissum sit. Quanto enim majus homo fruebatur Deo, tanto majore impietate dereliquit Deum, et factus est malo dignus æterno, qui hoc in se peremit bonum, quod esse posset æternum.—AUGUSTINE.

THE probabilities are followed by two paragraphs, important and remarkable. The first contains a qualification, the second an apology.

By way of qualification the Writer avows that he by no means wishes to question whether there be a penal retribution hereafter: he wishes only to shew that it will not be eternal.¹ Now considering that every argument alleged holds with almost the same force against *any* penal retribution as it does against an eternal one, we cannot help feeling that some explanation was called for, though at the same time we do not think that the explanation is either satisfactory or consistent. Certainly it is not too much to say, that if the Bible does not reveal an eternal punishment, it reveals no punishment at all! If language has any meaning, the texts of Holy Scripture declare an eternal future penalty; and if language has no meaning, they declare nothing. There is no middle course: and it does not appear in what way men would be the better if the Writer could establish both his points; *i.e.* if he could prove that Holy Scripture is silent upon the subject, and that pro-

¹ Ep. p. 496.

babilities are against the truth of the doctrine. Even in that case the most that could be said is that the matter is left in uncertainty; and every one knows that uncertainty affords no manner of security. The disbelief of the doctrine would by no means exempt us from the sentence of justice; “because it is not the foreknowledge of punishment which renders us obnoxious to it, but merely violating a known obligation.”

By way of apology the Writer declares that he proposes his views with great diffidence, inasmuch as he makes “no claim whatever to learning properly so called either as a theologian or a linguist.”³ We cannot help feeling that this is (to say the least) a weak apology. It will doubtless be a matter of just surprise to many persons, that the Writer speaks so positively upon the most difficult questions, not excepting those which demand learning and scholarship of no ordinary kind for their complete discussion. The confidence which fears not to array the opinions of yesterday against the belief of centuries, cannot appear justifiable because it is based upon an allowed want of knowledge. Perhaps there is no other subject upon which a writer would venture to publish his opinions with a confession that he is destitute of the only information which could warrant him in expressing an opinion at all. It would be a strange thing, for example, to open a treatise on Physical Astronomy, and to find the

² Butler’s Preface to his Sermons.

³ Ep. p. 497.

author pleading for a favourable construction of what might happen to be found in the book because he had no knowledge of the Mathematics. Yet this is the anomalous position of the Writer of the Epilogue. He fears not to challenge "the construction which the Church of Christ has in all ages given to our Lord's words," and to substitute for it the surmises of one "who can make no claim whatever to learning properly so called, either as a theologian or linguist!" How vast a disparity is here! How shall we fitly characterise the frame of mind which can deliberately propose the latter as a substitute for the former? How can we regard him as a sober or a reasonable man, who goes about to unsettle a truth which he himself confesses to have been held 'semper, ubique, et ab omnibus'?

Of course it will be asked with some degree of anxiety, what does the Writer himself supply in the room of the commonly received doctrine? What sense does *he* attach to the words of Holy Scripture? In vain shall we search the Epilogue for a satisfactory answer to this question. For in the first place we are asked "whether all the words employed by Christ and His Apostles are not satisfied by understanding that the punishment is eternal, only inasmuch as it involves the ultimate destruction or annihilation of those on whom it is to be inflicted?"⁴ On the next page, however, we are encouraged, or rather "constrained to hope even against hope, that

⁴ Ep. p. 496.

no rational being throughout God's vast universe shall ever be so entirely exiled from His fatherly presence as to be unable to turn to Him with penitence, or as to be beyond the reach of that mercy of which we are so often assured that it 'endureth for ever.'" How these statements are reconciled in the Writer's mind, so that he could thus place them side by side, we are at a loss to conjecture! The common doctrine has at least the merit of being consistent with itself, and we cannot fathom the reasons which moved the Writer to unsettle the grammatical meaning of Christ's words, when he had no intelligible sense to furnish in its stead.

In conclusion, we may be permitted to ask whether the Writer's repeated declaration that the 'vast majority of the human race'⁵ will be consigned to perdition, be not an assumption on his part? It seems to take for granted that the majority of the subjects of God's moral government will eventually be found to be rebels. Whether this be a just assumption or not it is not for us to determine; but such a conclusion seems to betoken little faith in the efficacy of those means which Almighty God has appointed for the recovery of the human race. It is a cheering thought that the redeemed are described in Holy Scripture as "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues:"⁶ whilst on the other hand, the number of the finally impenitent is nowhere set down in the Bible with

⁵ Ep. pp. 489, 493, 494, 496.

⁶ Rev. vii. 9.

such circumstantial precision as it is in the Epilogue.⁷ The contemplation of the destiny which awaits some of our race is doubtless appalling; but surely no repose is needed for an 'aching heart'⁸ under such circumstances, but that which is afforded by the conviction that the "Judge of all the earth will do right." So far as we are ourselves concerned, it is plainly our wisdom to be diligent in "working out our own salvation with fear and trembling," and in "walking in all the commandments of the Lord, blameless;" that so, by God's mercy, when that day arrives, which (as we are well assured) will come as a thief in the night, we may not be found unprepared.¹⁰

⁷ 'There is a great credibility, that the putting our misery in each other's power to the degree it is, and making men liable to vice to the degree we are; and in general the things which are objected against the moral scheme of Providence, may be, upon the whole, friendly and assistant to virtue, and productive of an overbalance of happiness: *i. e.* the things objected against may be means by which an overbalance of good will, in the end, be found produced.....Thus those things which we call irregularities may not be so at all; because they may be means of accomplishing wise and good ends more considerable. And it may be added as above, that they may also be the only means by which these wise and good ends are capable of being accomplished.'—Butler's Analogy, p. 131.

⁸ Ep. p. 497.

⁹ Genesis xviii. 25.

¹⁰ Non argumentari adversus Deum, sed divino potius, dum tempus est, debent parere præcepto, qui sempiterno cupiunt carere supplicio.—Aug. de Civ. xxi. 23.

CHAPTER III.

CONCLUSION.

Τί καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους αὐθήμερον πλάττεις ἁγίους, καὶ χειροτονεῖς θεολόγους, καὶ οἶον ἐμπνεῖς τὴν παιδευσιν, καὶ πεποίηκας λογίων ἀμαθῶν πολλὰ συνέδρια; Τί τοῖς ἀραχνέοις ὑφάσμασι, ἐνδεσμεῖς τοὺς ἀσθενεστέρους ὡς δὴ τι σοφὸν καὶ μέγα;—GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

BEFORE we conclude, there are other matters in the Epilogue which must be noticed.

We may regret for example that the Writer seems disposed to deny the distinctive character of the visible Church; as when he speaks of “that shapeless, boundless, placeless abstraction calling itself the Church.”¹ It is our custom (almost daily) to declare our belief in “one Catholic and Apostolic Church;”² perhaps in these days so much a custom that we have ceased to attach any very definite meaning to the words, or to reflect, as we say them, whether they have a meaning at all. Yet probably the Writer himself will allow that our Saviour Jesus Christ and His Apostles left behind them a visible Church, which had an outward form and a definite organization of some kind or other. Moreover, it is not too much to assume that a power to continue and to perpetuate orders and offices, to

¹ Epilogue, p. 481.

² Nicene Creed.

decide appeals in cases of controversy, to correct and restrain disorderly and unruly members, was entrusted to that society; a power, we may suppose, which none had a right to usurp. Further, though the Writer may doubt whether our Lord's promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world,"³ may be rightly appropriated by any *visible* body; yet he will scarcely deny that God's providence (which cares for sparrows, and clothes the lilies, and counts the hairs of our heads) has watched over that infant society. Under these circumstances it seems strange that God's Church alone out of all societies should have lost, not only its distinctive existence, but also every trace that it has existed at all; that, even if it ever did exist, it alone should have no terms of admission and of communion, and no power of self-government or self-control. It seems strange that other governments should be able (and that by Divine right⁴) to maintain their authority, to enforce their laws, to restrain rebels, and to exclude pretenders, but that God's Church alone should have been left by Him in all these respects helpless. It seems strange that we can say of this kingdom, and of that, 'it is here,' or 'it is gone'; but of God's Church alone we must aver that it is a "shapeless, boundless, placeless abstraction."

We may further regret that the Writer employs language so vague and uncertain, as almost to leave his reader in doubt whether there be such a thing as distinctive truth at all, *i. e.* whether one man may be

³ Matth. xxviii. 20.

⁴ Rom. xiii. 1, &c.

right and another wrong, so far that it is a question of real concernment whether we follow the one or the other. He speaks for instance thus: "Neither will any peculiarity in his theological opinions exclude any true christian from the assurance that 'God is love,' which he derives from the understanding."⁵ This is, to say the least, an unguarded way of speaking; for how great a diversity of opinion is consistent with one true faith, is left entirely an open question. Not to mention that it may be a perilous delusion which encourages a man to console himself with the thought that "God is love," if, whilst he professes the true faith of Christ, he be living in the habitual neglect of those divinely appointed institutions (as Common Prayer, Sacraments, and the hearing of God's Word) to which the promises of God are ordinarily confined. As a professed member of the Church of England, the Writer probably allows that "a man cannot be saved by that law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature:"⁶ and if so, "peculiarities of ecclesiastical system and of theological creed" may make all possible difference between one who is a "faithful servant of Christ," and one who is not. Yet we find the Writer mixing together a crowd of most opposite sectarians, who all defend their peculiarities by an appeal to God's Word, and then attempting to explain this anomalous 'phenomenon' in some way "compatible at once with the

⁵ Ep. p. 485.⁶ Article XVIII.⁷ Ep. p. 501.

reverence due to the sacred canon, and with the charity due by every man to his brother:"⁸ forgetting, in the meanwhile, that the attribute of that true charity which "suffereth long and is kind," is to "rejoice" only "in (or with) the truth."⁹ It is in fact difficult to say where this vagrant and counterfeit charity will stop, for it will just as soon denounce the sober decisions of truth as the wild excesses of bigotry. Indeed we find the Writer himself alluding in terms of complaint to some who "shut the gates of mercy on all who will not adopt their opinions, join in their solemnities, and attach themselves to their party."¹ Perhaps there may be some to whom this censure will justly apply, but we may nevertheless complain that it is thrown out in such a random way as to leave the impression that there is scarcely any latitude which "Love desires," which "Truth" may not be called upon to "allow."¹ Yet assuredly the Church of Christ, by "holding fast the form of sound words,"² and by "contending earnestly (*ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι*) for the faith once delivered to the saints,"³ shuts the gates of mercy upon none but those who first close them against themselves. For in this way, as well as by godly discipline, the Church fulfils her divine mission to bind and loose upon earth,⁴ and "whatever in this behalf is done by way of orderly and lawful proceeding, the Lord Himself has promised to ratify."⁵ The

⁸ Ep. pp. 467, 468.

⁹ 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 6.

¹ Ep. p. 499.

² 2 Tim. i. 13.

³ Jude ver. 3.

⁴ Matth. xvi. 19.

⁵ Hooker vi. iv. 1.

gates of mercy are closed and opened by the most just sentence of Almighty God; and neither by laxity of principle can we open those gates more widely, nor by bigotry can we shut them more closely, as the Writer seems to suppose.

We may also regret that the Author (unintentionally no doubt) so often throws back the blame of anomalous and evil consequences upon good and holy causes; thus confounding the use and abuse of a thing, and apparently forgetting that that which should be a blessing may, by man's sin, be turned into a curse. Thus we find him blaming "some parts of the creeds"⁶ for "darkening the great truth that 'God is love,' and defeating the great commandment of loving God supremely:" we hear him declare that "light, though from heaven itself, when transmitted through the exhalations of earth, may mislead even those whom it illuminates:"⁷ and we have before noticed that he traces some differences amongst Christians to supposed imperfections in the Bible itself. Now we are at a loss to conceive how the Creed can be said to darken the truth which it declares, and declares in the way which is most likely to preserve us from false doctrine, and so to keep us in the faith which 'worketh by love'; since God's commandment is "that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ," in order that "we may love one another as He gave us commandment."⁸ We cannot understand how light can mislead, or why men should be the worse for its

⁶ Ep. p. 481.

⁷ Ibid. p. 461.

⁸ 1 John iii. 23.

illumination; since it must be some illusion produced by their visual organs, and not any defect of light, which leads them astray. Nor can we suppose that it is anything else than the misunderstanding or the misuse of holy Scripture which makes it anything else than what it really is, "a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths."⁹

We may regret once more that, having ignored the existence of a visible Church, the Writer has gone on to devise a Catholic Church peculiarly his own; Catholic only, because it embraces within its

• Ps. cxix. 105.

We may regret also that the Writer speaks upon some subjects with a confidence which (even by his own confession) is not warranted by his acquaintance with them. Thus he speaks of the "*Catholic* finding seven sacraments" in the Bible, (p. 467) which is a mistake unless by Catholic he means Romanist. He says that "to the followers of Augustine the Bible appears to teach fatalism," by which the reader may be led to suppose that Augustine found fatalism in the Bible; a supposition which no one can entertain who has read any of S. Augustine's works. (See *De Civ. Dei*, v. 10.) He talks about our Reformers *protesting* against the system of the Church of Rome; whereas all the world knows that they busied themselves with correcting the abuses of their own communion and restoring it to (or reforming it by) a primitive model; and the original *protest* was made by the Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, and others, at the Diet of Spires, against the Emperor's decree that no change should be made in Religion until it was sanctioned by the Council.

We may perhaps in this place inquire whether it is not a very superficial view of the subject which leads the Writer to state that "the *whole controversy* regarding transubstantiation *rests on the precise meaning of a Greek word* which it is perfectly certain that Christ never uttered" (p. 468). Here also we may further venture to ask what the *Writer* means by the expression "hypostatic union of the

wide enclosure men of every conceivable difference of opinion, both as regards doctrine and discipline. He suggests the compilation of a new hagiology (which he is pleased to call *Protestant*) including Popes, Jesuits, Monks, Nuns, Reformers, Presbyterians, Independents, and Methodists, in the motley rank of its worthies. The unity of this new Church is "to be effected not by external conformity, but by acts of devotion, of humility, of self-sacrifice, of temperance, of justice, of truth and peace."¹ It is conceived that this strange proposition needs only to be named in order to make sure its rejection by sober and Christian men.

But it is now time to bid farewell to the reader who has had patience to follow along the winding path through which he has been led. Yet before we conclude it may be well to collect, in a short summary, the principal matters which have been considered in the preceding pages.

With regard to the all-important doctrine of the Incarnation, we have shewn that the teaching of the Epilogue cannot be made to harmonize with the teach-

Logos with our humanity" ? (p. 478). The phrase "hypostatical union" has been employed to denote the union of the two *natures* of Christ in one *hypostasis*, as distinguished from the Nestorian hypothesis of *two persons* in Christ; but how can this use of the term be reconciled with other parts of the Epilogue? Can the Writer intend that the Logos is one hypostasis, and that another is the man to whom (according to his teaching) the Logos is united?

¹ Ep. p. 499.

ing of the Church, but that it has many points of contact with early philosophical and erroneous systems. We have pointed out the Writer's denial of the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment, his unwarrantable criticism, his rash dealing with the words of God, his fallacious analogies and arguments. With a full knowledge and consideration of the magnitude and importance of the charge, we have accused the Writer of corrupting one Christian doctrine and denying another. Whether the arguments here alleged be strong enough to bear the weight of the conclusion which has been made to rest upon them, we must leave others to determine; avowing, in the meanwhile, our readiness to blot from these pages whatever, through lack of knowledge or by human infirmity, may have been said amiss. From all readers, however, we entreat a serious perusal and a candid judgment, for assuredly in the matters here discussed are many "issues of life and death."

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APPENDIX.

(A).

THE phenomenon of a revived Gnosticism is so unlooked for that it demands some further consideration. The resemblance between the expressed sentiments of the Gnostics and those of the Writer of the Epilogue will be in some measure explained if we can trace them back to a common source. This source is believed to be the Philosophy of Plato.

The important and paramount influence of Platonism in forming the Gnostic heresy is pointed out in Dr. Burton's third Bampton Lecture.¹

In attempting to estimate the probable influence of the Platonic philosophy upon the Writer of the Epilogue,² we must bear in mind the principal doctrines of Plato. These may be collected under four heads. Plato held the Eternity of Matter in order to account for the Origin of Evil:³ he indulged in certain fanciful speculations concerning his Ideas, or as they are sometimes called his Models:⁴ he held a kind of Trinity consisting of the Deity, the Idea, and Matter;⁵ and he taught a certain doctrine of the Logos.⁶

If now we open the Epilogue we read as follows: "The purest Theism has nothing at variance with the belief that the eternal fountain of life has been salient from all eternity,—that creation is

¹ Bamp. Lect. p. 57.

² Concerning the progress and increasing influence of Platonism, see a Lecture by Professor A. Butler, printed in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Journal*, No. III. p. 341.

³ Dr. Burton's Bamp. Lect. pp. 59, 60.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 61, 62.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 60, and note 22, p. 327.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 223.

coeval with the Creator⁷—that to impart existence to subordinate intelligencies is one of the inherent attributes of God, &c.”⁸

Here the dogma of the Eternity of Matter is stated and vindicated; and in this respect there is agreement with Plato. But the Writer of the Epilogue lacks the excuse which Plato could plead for his speculations. Plato alleged that matter is eternal in order to account for the origin of evil, and to rescue his supreme God from the responsibility of it.⁹ The Epilogue seems to assert it merely for the sake of asserting it.

The following sentence occurs in the next paragraph of the Epilogue, “And that prolific volition, what else was it but the will of Him who is love, that His throne should be girt about by a countless host of spirits, whom He might regard with complacency and enrich by his beneficence?”¹ This is the Writer’s plea for the eternity of creation, and the constant multiplication of created beings. It is a speculation not altogether unlike the doctrine of the Ideas. Plato supposed that the images of things which were hereafter to be created (like the seal before the impression) were always present to the mind of the Deity; and that these images must have existed before the material copies of them.² He also conceived that these images possessed a real existence, and he gave to them the name of Form, Example, Archetype, or *Idea*. Much in the same way the Writer of the Epilogue philosophizes about the everliving activity of creative

⁷ We have here a remarkable example of the Writer’s inconsistency. In this same paragraph he rebukes the folly ‘of ascribing the properties of time to a state in which time was not,’ and yet his pen has not traced six lines before he says that ‘creation is *coeval* with the Creator’! How can we say that one event is coeval with another except by a comparison of them one with the other in respect of time? Does not this way of speaking ‘ascribe the properties of time’ to the eternal pre-existence of the Deity?

⁸ Epilogue, p. 474.

⁹ It is very remarkable that almost all heathen systems, and especially the oriental ones, contain the notion that matter is eternal. The Hindoo Vedas assert something to the effect that God pervades all matter, matter itself being an outward and visible manifestation of God. The Deity, abstractedly considered, is a pure, impalpable spirit, and the only way in which He can make Himself known is through the medium of created matter; but they hold that so soon as ever this creative and material manifestation of the Deity takes place, evil immediately and necessarily follows.

¹ Ep. p. 474.

² Dr. Burton’s Bamp. Lect. p. 62.

power during ages past, and thinks that the "fountain of life" has been always and without interruption "salient." He differs from Plato mainly in this, that he supposes the substance as well as the idea, the structure as well as the plan, the work no less than the model, the material as well as the spiritual form, to have existed with God from eternity.

It is suggested with some hesitation, and not without a hope that some other explanation may be forthcoming, that the influence of Platonism may be traced in the language used by the Writer when he alludes to the doctrine of the Trinity. It is difficult to know how to judge of the Writer's sentiments, and how to understand his words. He says, for instance, that "to the adherents of the Nicene Creed (and it is hoped that he is one of them) the Scriptures disclose a doctrine which reduces the thoughts of the heart to the silent adoration of a mystery incapable of adequate expression."³ He speaks of Incarnate, Indwelling, and Creative Deity,⁴ but we are constrained to ask with some anxiety whether he acknowledges only three *manifestations* of the Deity, or whether he confesses "Three Persons in one God." His words are still more perplexing when we find him musing about a revelation which "exhibits *Him who is love becoming in the person of His Son a sacrifice for us.*"⁵ How much is there to choose between the Trinity of Plato and the Trinity of the Epilogue? Does not each of them demand a greater sacrifice of reason than when we bow to the teaching of Scripture, as it has ever been received by the Church, and expressed in the Creeds? May we not state the difference between them to be mainly this:

³ Epilogue, p. 467.

⁴ Ibid. p. 472. The Writer speaks of "the very God of our Bibles, as revealed in the *person* of His Son, and communicating with us in the *person* of His Spirit" (p. 480): but this very mention of the person of the Son and the Spirit is almost equivalent to denying their divine personality. For it merely amounts to saying that God acts in the person of another, which, of course, does not necessarily imply the proper divinity of the person in whom He acts. So in another place (before alluded to) the Writer speaks of "*Him who is love becoming in the person of His Son a sacrifice for us*" (p. 478). The notion that God acts in the person of the Son and in the person of the Spirit, is quite different from the Christian doctrine, that the three coequal Persons coexisted as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost from all eternity.

⁵ Ibid. p. 478.

that the Trinity of Plato is a Trinity of keen reason yearning after and almost reaching up to truth: the Trinity of the Epilogue is the Trinity of Revelation brought down to the standard of Reason.

Those passages of the Epilogue which relate to the Logos have already been fully considered in their relation to Gnostic doctrines. Dr Burton draws a contrast between Plato and Holy Scripture, which, in a few words, may serve to give an idea of Plato's doctrine, "Plato spoke of the Logos or Reason of God as the Deity Himself in action: S. John speaks of the Logos as the begotten Son of God."⁶ Whether does the Writer of the Epilogue approach more closely to Plato or to S. John? He represents "God, who is love, as becoming in the person of His Son, a sacrifice for us;" and says that "the Logos united to a man"⁷ lives, and dies. Does this imply more than "the Deity Himself in action,"—or does it harmonize with the truth that the Logos is the only-begotten Son of God?

Amongst all human systems of philosophy which have for their object to inquire concerning the Supreme God, that of Plato deservedly occupies the highest place, and most merits our attention. If we walk with a becoming diffidence of ourselves and of our guide, we may safely follow the broad-hearted philosopher to the most distant boundaries of thought and contemplation. We cannot help admiring the clear light of an intellect which seems to burn with the fire of an inspiration almost divine, but never with safety may we forget that the light is human, and therefore liable to mislead. Probably few persons will doubt the wisdom of giving heed to the following caution: "While the reputation of Platonism has thus been upheld by its partial sympathy with the genius of revealed truth, I need scarcely remind you that this alliance has not always been favourable to its encouragement. With many of the stricter fathers of the Church, Plato was sternly pronounced to be the '*Condimentarium hæreticorum*.' A later authority furnishes the warning, not perhaps always unreasonable, to the weaker order of minds, '*Platonem tum præcipuè cavendum esse, cum piis dogmatibus magis similis esse videtur*.' And Clement VIII. was earnestly persuaded by the famous Cardinal Bellarmine to avoid sanctioning, by his pontifical patronage, this too seductive counterfeit of Christian piety."⁸

⁶ Dr. Burton's Bamp. Lect. p. 223.

⁷ Epilogue, p. 478.

⁸ Irish Eccl. Journal, No. III. p. 342. In Professor Butler's Lecture there are some valuable remarks upon the apparent coincidences in terms and in doctrines between Plato and the New Testament.

(B.)

THE following remarks upon the language of Palestine, and that spoken by our Lord are put forth without any intention of provoking discussion, and without the least pretence that they will throw additional light upon the subject, but simply and solely to shew that something has been said on both sides of the question. Perhaps also we may be allowed to suggest that it is scarcely consistent in one who throws doubt upon truths which are received by most Christians as certain, to claim certainty for this matter of fact, which some persons think doubtful.¹ Indeed men who in point of scholarship are perhaps not inferior to the Writer, have not thought it unnecessary to produce proofs in support of a particular view of the subject, nor do they require us to assent to their proof as undoubtedly conclusive. Even if full weight be given to the evidence in favour of the proposition that Christ *always* "spoke in a dialect of the Syro-Chaldaic," a person might be excused who regarded the assertion as a thing probably true, and not as established beyond all question.

Indeed, if we examine the proposition somewhat more closely, it will appear that the probability of its truth depends upon another inquiry: viz. what was the prevailing language in Palestine during our Blessed Lord's ministry on earth. Now all learned men seem to be pretty well agreed that what is called the Babylonian Aramaic became the language of Palestine after the Captivity,² and that it continued to be spoken there more or less until the time of Flavius Josephus.³ Yet it is difficult to say to what extent Greek may have prevailed in Palestine at the time of our Lord. We must bear in mind that Judæa was conquered by Alexander, and afterwards became subject by turns to the Greeco-Ægyptian or Syro-Macedonian princes. that Hellenisms appear in the most ancient Aramaic frag-

¹ For example, it is not so certain as that "the hand of an inspired writer did trace the very words *εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον*," though the Writer thinks it needful to *assume* this as a doubtful hypothesis.

² Dr. Pfannkuche on the Language of Palestine in the age of Christ, p. 30, (Clark, Edinburgh, 1833.)

³ *Ib.* pp. 54, 55.

ments in Daniel:⁴ that after the Macedonian conquests Greek soon became the language of the people of rank through all the extensive dominions which had been subdued by Alexander:⁵ that the customs of the Greeks were copied in the subdued Asiatic nations, and even Jews assumed Greek names for their children:⁶ that Greek was the language of learning and of fashion:⁷ all of which considerations tend to shew that the Greek tongue was likely to acquire extensive prevalency. Add to this that several Greek colonies were introduced into Palestine, and that all Herod's influence was used to bring in Greek language and customs. Very probably therefore the inhabitants of whole towns (if not districts), or sects (as the Herodians) habitually spoke Greek; just as there are districts in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, in which the English language is always spoken.⁸

Under these circumstances we shall not be surprised to find that scholars are by no means agreed as to the language which our Lord spoke. Thus much at least is credible, that He would speak in a language which His hearers would understand, and so might employ Hebrew⁹ (Aramaic) or Greek or Latin as occasion required.¹ That He sometimes spoke in Greek is for many reasons probable; "because in Galilee and Peræa He was in frequent intercourse with foreigners: because even in Jerusalem an interview was sought with Him by Greeks (John xii. 20), and these surely spoke no other language than Greek: because we must suppose that the conferences between Jesus and Pilate mentioned in John xviii. 33—37, and xix. 9—11, were certainly carried on neither in Aramaic nor in Latin,² but in Greek; and because Mary in her conversation with Jesus (John xx. 14, &c.) seems to have made use of the Greek language, until she recognised Him as arisen from the dead, when she instantly returns to the familiar Aramaic, and addresses Him with the word *Rabboni*."³ If therefore we grant that the dialect

⁴ Dr. Pfannkuche, p. 9. The importance of these supposed Hellenisms has been greatly over-rated. See 'the Christian Advocate's publication for 1841,' by Dr. Mill, pp. 64, &c.

⁵ Campbell, vol. i. p. 34. ⁶ 2 Macc. iv. 9, 10, &c. ⁷ Dr. Pfannkuche, p. 16.

⁸ See Dr. Pfannkuche, pp. 13—15, and the Translator's note.

⁹ Dr. Pfannkuche, p. 41.

¹ There were peculiar dialects confined to particular districts in Palestine. (Notes on the Gospels, by F. M., vol. i. p. 31.)

² This does not appear to be *necessarily* the case. However Greek was no doubt the common language of the courts. (Dr. Pfannkuche, p. 16.)

³ Dr. Rohr, Theol. Tracts as above, pp. 89, 90.

spoken in many districts of Palestine was the Babylonian Aramaic, it by no means follows (as the Writer was bound strictly to prove) that our Blessed Saviour *always* spoke in that dialect: and it is not possible to prove *certainly* that he did not speak Greek, when He delivered the solemn addresses which concludes the twenty-fifth chapter of S. Matthew.

The difficulty of determining with strict accuracy (and a *strict* proof alone could justify the Writer's positive assertion, and the inferences which he draws from it), what was the language used by our Lord, may be further illustrated by examining the following learned attempt to settle the question. It is believed to contain much of what can be said in favour of the Writer's position. "Some fragments of His speeches preserved in the original language:⁴ the Aramaic colour everywhere observable in the translations of His lectures as we find them in the Evangelists: and Paul's relation that he in an ecstasy was by Jesus addressed in the modern Hebrew or Palestinian Aramaic language,⁵ place this assertion (viz. that Jesus habitually made use of the Aramaic) beyond a doubt."⁶

It is observed with justice by Dr. Pfannkuche's translator that the proof here alleged is extremely weak. "Four quotations are given to shew that our Lord spoke in the Aramaic dialect, but the sum total of Aramaic words amounts to no more than three, viz. *Ephphatha, Talitha, Cumi*: for the learned Doctor has before shewn that the exclamation on the cross is pure Hebrew, from Ps. xxii. 2: and that it was so is rendered probable by the fact that they who were standing by did not understand its import (Matt. xxvii. 47; Mark xv. 35.) We notice also that Dr. Pfannkuche here only presupposed, and has not *proved*, that the Greek Gospels are only translations. Moreover S. Paul being a learned Jew would understand the ancient Hebrew, [and if he were addressed in that language we can explain the statement (Acts xxii. 9), that his companions saw the light but *understood* not the words (τὴν δὲ φωνὴν οὐκ ἤκουσαν) of him that spake.] Indeed if Jesus had spoken to him in the language of the country, there seems little occasion⁸ that S. Paul should

⁴ Matth. xxvii. 46; Mark xv. 34; v. 41; vii. 34.

⁵ Acts ix. 5; xxii. 7; xxvi. 14.

⁶ Dr. Pfannkuche, p. 46, &c.

⁷ See p. 41, and the Translator's note.

⁸ Yet this *may* shew that S. Paul was speaking in Greek.—Dr. Burton.

specify that he was addressed in that language. All his hearers would of course expect that the language of the country had been used, unless the Apostle had told them something to the contrary.”

These remarks however are made without the slightest intention of denying that Jesus habitually spoke in the every-day language of Palestine. Undoubtedly (as has been observed) He always spoke to His hearers in words which they could understand: and as He was the living Word, He must have had all words at His command. But whether this occasion required that He should speak in Greek or in Aramaic; whether we have a report of His *very* words or not, the Writer of the Epilogue cannot (as his argument required) *unquestionably* prove.

⁹ See Translator's note to Dr. Pfannkuche, pp. 46. 47.

THE END.

